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New York

*President*: Mr. Udovenko ..... (Ukraine)

*The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.*

**Agenda item 22**

**Cooperation between the United Nations and the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation**

**Report of the Secretary-General (A/52/299 and Add.1 and 2)**

**Draft resolution (A/52/L.1)**

**The President:** I call on the representative of France to introduce draft resolution A/52/L.1.

**Mr. Dejammet** (France) *(interpretation from French)*: Two years ago the General Assembly adopted without a vote resolution 50/3, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation".

I have the honour, on behalf of the francophone group in New York, to submit another draft resolution under this agenda item. This draft resolution demonstrates that the cooperation engaged in for two years under resolution 50/3 has been fruitful and has great potential for development.

May I add that the 41 sponsors of the draft resolution have been joined by Cape Verde, Poland, Seychelles and Tunisia.

The relationship begun in 1978, with the granting of observer status to the Agency, has flourished remarkably over the last two years. The pattern was set by several firm commitments, in particular a first cooperation agreement between the Agency and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1976. Then there was an agreement with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) in 1990. Participation by the Agency in United Nations activities, and vice versa, has made it possible to better ascertain and appreciate resources available to serve common interests and objectives. We welcome the opening of an office of the Agency in New York in May 1995, which has contributed a great deal to this harmonization.

Following the adoption of resolution 50/3, on 16 October 1995, a cooperation framework agreement was concluded with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) on 26 October of that year, and in October 1996 an agreement was concluded with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), an agreement containing several development projects and programmes for implementation.

Since then the seal has been set on these agreements by the signing, on 25 June 1997, by the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the Agency of a cooperation agreement between the two organizations. On 8 September 1997 a similar agreement was signed between the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Agency.

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These agreements signal new, encouraging prospects. On the ground, joint actions taken by the Agency and UNICEF or UNDP make possible the creation of a synergy, of resources and personnel, in the service of development.

Action with UNICEF includes an education and literacy programme for girls and young women in rural areas in Benin, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Mauritania and Viet Nam; a plan for basic education for displaced or poor families in Djibouti; a primary education programme in Viet Nam; and a technical assistance programme in Haiti to train teachers and principals and to provide teaching materials and resources.

The cooperation agreement with UNDP is intended, in particular, to strengthen the rule of law; to promote and protect human rights; to support the democratic process and good governance; to organize and strengthen national capacities; and to improve the economic development of the countries of the South, with, among other things, support for the establishment and management of small and medium-sized enterprises.

We must welcome this complementarity, through effective coordination, whose fruits are being seen on the ground, to the benefit of the people that need them. This enhances the visibility and credibility of the promoters of these projects.

The partnership between the United Nations and the Agency has taken on a new dimension with the signing on 25 June of the cooperation agreement by the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the Agency. The agreement expands cooperation to new fields, such as preventive diplomacy, the maintenance and consolidation of peace and, pursuant to paragraph 4 of resolution 50/3, all subjects of common interest in the political, economic, social, scientific and cultural fields. The agreement also covers exchange of information and documentation.

Finally, we welcome the most recent agreement, concluded with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on 8 September, which puts the emphasis on joint actions to strengthen the rule of law, and protect human rights — particularly the rights of women and the rights of the child — and wage the campaign against racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia. This agreement gives concrete expression to, and strengthens, cooperation which has existed for several years already, particularly through training seminars, where the expertise acquired by the Agency can be put to good use.

The types of cooperation developed between the Agency and the United Nations are not limited to these agreements. Dialogue and reciprocal representation, in particular, have a part to play.

Here I should like to stress the contribution made by the francophone group during the preparations for the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly, on sustainable development, which made it possible to achieve consensus between countries with very different political, geographical, cultural and social circumstances, since that is the mission of francophonie. We hope that this positive and profitable experience can be repeated during the preparations for the ministerial conference on water to be held next spring in Paris.

May I also mention the expansion of this cooperation to electoral assistance to francophone countries, which led to a very productive meeting a few weeks ago.

However, we have not exhausted all the possibilities for partnership. New interests have recently emerged in the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, and the Department for Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat. The prospects for cooperation have much to offer.

As I speak before the General Assembly, and on the eve of the Hanoi summit which will bring together many of the States represented in this Hall, it gives me great satisfaction to stress the contribution to the objectives pursued here made by bodies that represent French-speaking countries, in particular, their Agency which, I might add will adopt in Hanoi the title of Agency for the French-Speaking Community.

Undoubtedly, the success of this cooperation is partly due to the rationalization and synergy of the resources it is creating. This cooperation helps avoid any useless and costly duplication.

Also, such is the dynamism of multilateralism when it harnesses a network of solidarity to work for the same ideals and when it thus nurtures cooperation. The resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Agency has borne fruit and still contains an abundance of new projects.

We therefore hope that these promises will materialize in the next two years. For this reason, we thank all the Member States for supporting the draft

resolution so that a review of these new achievements can be included in the report that we call upon the Secretary-General to submit to us at the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

**Mr. Kittikhoun** (Lao People's Democratic Republic) (*interpretation from French*): The Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation (ACTC), which was established on 20 March 1970 in Niamey in the Republic of the Niger, was born of an ideal — that of bringing together countries that use French as a common language in a joint endeavour, and seems to express a new solidarity and a further element in rapprochement between peoples through constant dialogue among civilizations.

Today, 27 years after the ACTC was established, it has a membership of 47 States and Governments. As a meeting point for dialogue between Africa, America, Asia and Europe, the primary mandate of this unique intergovernmental organization for French-speaking countries is to affirm and develop multilateral cooperation between its members in the fields of education and training, culture and communications, energy, the environment, agriculture, economic development, scientific information, and support for democracy and the rule of law.

The relationship between the Agency and the United Nations is not a new one. It already goes back a number of years. In 1978, the ACTC was granted observer status by the General Assembly, thus enabling it to take part as an observer in all the conferences and meetings held under the auspices of the United Nations.

Since then, the ACTC has participated in the regular sessions of the General Assembly and the meetings of its subsidiary bodies that deal with issues of particular interest to its activities. In addition, it has also taken part in several major conferences, namely the World Summit for Children, the Earth Summit, the World Summit for Social Development, the World Food Conference, and so on.

At the same time, while we, the French-speaking community are actively preparing for the forthcoming francophone summit in Hanoi, we welcome the fact that the relationship between the Agency and the organizations of the United Nations system continues to develop.

In the field of education and culture, the Agency and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) are collaborating closely to implement programmes of interest to both organizations, such as basic education, teacher training, distance learning and so forth. The Agency signed a framework agreement with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) in 1990 which provides for the implementation of joint projects in the areas of energy, industrial technology, the establishment and management of small and medium-sized enterprises, feasibility studies, the promotion of investment, and so forth.

The Agency has also concluded cooperation agreements with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR) in areas where they have specific interests in common.

In short, cooperation between the ACTC and the United Nations has developed considerably, particularly in the last two years since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 50/3. We very much hope that this cooperation will be strengthened even further, in the interest of both organizations and of peace and international cooperation. For its part, the Lao People's Democratic Republic will spare no effort to promote this fruitful cooperation.

**Mr. Boisson** (Monaco) (*interpretation from French*): The Principality of Monaco, as a member of the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation since it was set up in 1970 in Niamey, particularly welcomes the development and strengthening of cooperation between this institution which brings together States and Governments that use French as a common language, and the United Nations, which has from the outset accorded the French language its due status as a language of diplomacy. As one of the two working languages of the United Nations Secretariat and one of the six official languages of its bodies, the French language, which is also the language of the Agency, has paved the way for the establishment and subsequent development of cooperation between these two intergovernmental organizations.

In 1978, in its resolution 33/18, the United Nations General Assembly had already taken account of this special feature and the potential it offered by inviting the Agency to participate in its sessions and the meetings of its subsidiary bodies as an observer.

In this capacity, the Agency has been able to be associated with and contribute to the major world

conferences convened by the United Nations, such as the World Summit for Children in 1990, the Earth Summit in 1992, the World Conference on Human Rights and the Tokyo International Conference on African Development in 1993, the World Conference on Population and Development in 1995, the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, HABITAT II, in 1996 and the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly in June this year.

In each case, preparatory meetings and working groups enabled the francophone world to speak with one voice on a series of questions, which facilitated our search for compromise on texts that were often essential, because of their nature and their scope.

This cooperation is fully in keeping with the constitutional mandate of both organizations: the promotion of peace, international security, democracy and economic and social development.

The Agency's objectives, defined in article I of its Charter, revised and adopted in Marrakesh last December, include assisting in the establishment and development of democracy; the prevention of conflicts; support for the state of law and human rights; enhancement of the dialogue between cultures and civilizations; bringing peoples together through enhancing their knowledge of each other; and, finally, strengthening the solidarity of its members through multilateral cooperation in order to promote their economic expansion.

The cooperation agreement, officially signed on 25 June 1997 by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, and the Secretary-General of the Agency, Mr. Jean-Louis Roy, has, by making it official, confirmed the determination of the two institutions to work together.

The Agreement has already led to consultations — in Paris last June, and in Libreville last July — between the two organizations on the crises in certain African countries, primarily in the Great Lakes region. With regard to electoral assistance, the Agency has developed a well-known expertise, based both on its own experience and on that of the non-governmental organizations with which it has worked for many years with confidence and effectiveness. It has also provided regular assistance, along with the United Nations and regional organizations, to the States that request it.

Along the same lines, and given their athletic and cultural nature, the francophone games — the third round of which has just been held in Madagascar — have been the occasion for young athletes and artists from 36 countries of the francophone community to come together in peaceful and friendly competition, designed to develop among them trust and solidarity beyond borders. The regular holding of these games, which are held in a different State each time, undoubtedly enhances mutual understanding among the participants and thus promotes peace and international understanding.

This cooperation also extends to activities of prime importance to my Government, namely, good governance, the promotion and protection of human rights and the establishment of the state of law, as well as support for the democratization process and the improvement of judiciary systems and interparliamentary cooperation.

The Agency and its International School play a considerable role in this respect through training and awareness programmes for political authorities, magistrates, policemen, teachers and students, in workshops, seminars and internships. Their actions, which support and are complementary to those of the United Nations, deserve more than ever to be emphasized and encouraged.

On 8 September last, a framework agreement for cooperation was drawn up between the Agency and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. It will certainly lead to the further development of common initiatives in these key areas.

Harmonious and lasting economic and social development with respect for the dignity of humankind and its deepest aspirations is one of the basic objectives the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation shares with the United Nations.

The well-targeted and practical activities developed in this regard in the fields of new and renewable sources of energy, the transfer of technologies and the management of natural resources in order to protect the environment should also be increased in the future through strengthened cooperation between the two institutions.

The human dimension of development and of intergovernmental cooperation is broadly taken into account, and often in a very original way, by the Agency, which promotes initiatives to bring its partners

together on the basis of multilingualism and multiculturalism.

The Market for African Art and Entertainment, which the Agency launched in 1993, is an example of the determination of those involved in cooperation among francophone countries to see their projects not only in economic terms but also from the perspective of cultural and intellectual enrichment.

The draft intergovernmental convention on culture is another example, as well as a symbol, of this. The first truly standardizing measure to be taken by the States and Governments that are members of the Agency, it was carefully drawn up in accordance with the mandate delivered by the summit of Heads of State and Government in Cotonou in December 1995 and by the Conference of Ministers of French-speaking Countries in February 1996.

The text provides, in particular, for the commitment of signatory countries to provide financial and technical assistance for the creation and collective management of royalties and related rights, in order to facilitate the dissemination of works by authors, interpreters or performers, in keeping with the Rome Convention of 1961, as well as by any individual deemed to be such by the legislation of a signing State.

This matter naturally leads me to emphasize that cooperation between the United Nations and the Agency takes place at several levels and across the whole of the United Nations system, including specialized agencies as different as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) or the United Nations Industrial Development Organization.

UNESCO and the francophone Agency work together very closely, for example, on implementing certain programmes of the International Fund for the Promotion of the Study of African Languages and Cultures, programmes which recognize the place and role of vernacular languages alongside a lingua franca, as a factor of development and identity.

On the basis of the cooperation agreement signed in 1976 between the two intergovernmental institutions, and strengthened in 1990 by an additional protocol creating a joint consultative commission, joint operational activities are regularly carried out by UNESCO and the Agency in the areas of basic education, education for adults, and after-school education — the very foundations of an economic and social development that truly takes into account the human dimension of progress.

For the Agency as well as for UNESCO, development is multidimensional; it cannot be reduced to economic growth alone. Economy, culture, education, science and technology are individual elements, certainly, but they are complementary and interdependent, and development per se, centred on men and women and their true needs, can be ensured only by focusing on all those elements together.

As we commemorate today the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty and pay tribute to those who suffer from it, we cannot overlook the fact that development and progress cannot be reduced to the implementation of macroeconomic theories but must, as a priority, be directed, through concrete and tangible actions, towards the neediest and most deprived on every continent. That is the message transmitted to us by Father Joseph Wresinski, the founder of ADT Fourth World, which promoted this International Day for the Eradication of Poverty.

That is the message that the principal figures in development assistance today have understood in undertaking to promote simple, practical and workable projects in tune with the daily demands of the communities with which they are concerned. That is the option that the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) have unreservedly chosen.

The cooperation agreement that has bound them together since 1990 has facilitated the implementation of practical projects in the spheres of crafts, agriculture, fishing, animal husbandry and even the use of solar energy.

Nor have poor urban areas in both North and South been overlooked. The most vulnerable populations, living in critically precarious conditions, described by Father Wresinski as the "fourth world", and which can be found in every major city, are the focus of studies and seminars and of projects for training and social integration designed to improve their standards of living and environment. Linked to the creation of economic and commercial activities adapted to the various areas concerned, microeconomic and microfinance projects supported by the Agency and often carried out with the assistance of local bodies like Environmental

Development Action in the Third World (ENDA) have had beneficial, rapid and lasting results. We must therefore promote them by encouraging this timely interagency collaboration.

Respecting as they do human diversity and its contribution to man's progress and the natural solidarity that is based on a shared history, these programmes, we feel, are good reflections of the philosophy that underlies the cooperation between the United Nations system as a whole and the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation.

I think I could find no better argument for urging the General Assembly, which is always eager to improve the lives of today's men and women — and particularly the neediest among them — on both the material and the intellectual levels, to adopt the draft resolution before us, which is devoted to such cooperation and of which the Principality of Monaco is a sponsor.

The adoption of this text will send a welcoming and encouraging message to the Agency's partners, who are also members of the United Nations and who will in the very near future be meeting at the level of Heads of State and Government in Hanoi, Viet Nam, to renew, *inter alia*, the framework of their cooperation and strengthen their institutions by electing, for the first time, a secretary-general of the francophone countries.

**Mr. Tanasescu** (Romania) (*interpretation from French*): It is my honour today to speak on behalf of a country whose francophone tradition goes back to the beginning of the nineteenth century. When it became a full member of the movement of countries that use French as a common language in 1991, Romania sought to ensure the continuity of its modern cultural tradition, which is deeply imbued with French spirit and values.

Today's discussion on cooperation between the United Nations and the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation is taking place at a specific juncture for cultural developments on the world scale. In the two years since we last discussed this subject, the process of the expansion of global communications and data networks has accelerated. That development has created both opportunities and challenges for the universal culture of the next millennium and for the prospects for cultural diversity, as well as for our cooperation as francophone countries. It is our common duty and responsibility to transmit over the information superhighway and airwaves the traditional and modern values that are strongly linked by the French language.

The Secretary-General's report on this agenda item (A/52/299 and Add.1) provides a detailed and comprehensive picture of the progress made in recent years in cooperation between the United Nations and the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation. I should like to indicate a few factors that we feel have made a decisive contribution to strengthening that cooperation.

First, there is the political support given by the Heads of State or Government of countries that use French as a common language to the work of the United Nations and their determination to enter into a new partnership with the various components of the United Nations system. This is an example that demonstrates that political will can bear fruit to the benefit of both organizations and their memberships.

Secondly, we have in mind the existence of areas of action and interest that are common to both organizations. The complementary nature of certain activities and programmes in which the Agency and the United Nations are engaged has led to the holding of periodic discussions between their secretariats to identify subjects, measures and procedures to facilitate their cooperation and coordination.

Thirdly, we believe that the creation of a legal framework for such cooperation, through the elaboration and conclusion of cooperation agreements between the Agency and several bodies within the United Nations system, has provided a guarantee of the continuity and long-term stability of their relationship. We believe that the agreement signed on 25 June 1997 by the Secretaries-General of the two organizations is essential to the strengthening of such cooperation. Pursuant to the provisions of the agreement, the United Nations and the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation may decide to act jointly in the implementation of projects that are of mutual interest, to set up committees or commissions to advise them on specific matters, and to exchange information and documentation.

We welcome the framework cooperation agreement signed between the Agency and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and are convinced that the 1998 fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights will be celebrated throughout the French-speaking countries. This is a moral duty we all owe to

Jean-Jacques Rousseau and to all the heroes who have died over the course of time defending his ideals.

The last factor that has contributed to the current level of cooperation between the two organizations is the ongoing and sustained work of the ACTC office in New York, for which we congratulate it most heartily. The continuing consultations begun by the office have facilitated the exchange of information and views between the French-speaking countries and have allowed several documents of interest to those countries to be drafted. The preparations for the General Assembly's special session on the mid-term review and appraisal of the overall implementation of Agenda 21, including the drafting of a document as our group's contribution to the session, was a defining moment for the office's activities.

In early September, Bucharest, the capital of my country, hosted the Third International Conference of the New or Restored Democracies on Democracy and Development, organized jointly by my Government and the United Nations Development Programme. The Conference's special topic was the relationship between democracy and development. High-level representatives of Governments, non-governmental organizations and academic and university circles from 77 countries — including several French-speaking countries — presented their experiences and thoughts on the topic and adopted a Conference document that is already available as an official document of the United Nations.

We wished to share this information for two reasons. The first was to thank the ACTC for its generous contribution to the process started by the Conference. The second was to suggest as one possible sphere of cooperation between us, both as French-speaking countries and as United Nations Members, the study of our experiences in the democratization process. The drafting of such a study, which could be submitted to the next Conference, to be hosted by an African country in the year 2000, would offer a new area for cooperation, not only between our countries, but also between the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation and the United Nations. Our permanent mission in New York, in cooperation with the ACTC office, could initiate consultations in that respect.

**Mr. Hachani** (Tunisia) (*interpretation from French*): The consideration of agenda item 22, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation", has given Tunisia the pleasant opportunity to speak on this subject.

The relationship between the Agency and the United Nations is quite exemplary and dates back to 1978, when the General Assembly adopted resolution 33/18, which gave that institution observer status, enabling it to take part in the work of the Organization and its subsidiary bodies. This has allowed the Agency to reaffirm its presence by taking part not only in the activities in New York, but also in major events in the life of the Organization and its principal agencies over the past six years. Whether at the World Summit for Children in New York in 1990, the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993, the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo in 1994, the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, or the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) in 1996, I would stress that the Agency has played an effective and important role in ensuring coordination and rapprochement between the positions of its states members. The Agency is indeed a unique organization, bringing together countries that, while dispersed throughout several continents, share a common language and the noble objectives that unite them despite their cultural and geographic diversity and their level of development.

United around a common ideal, the country members of the Agency see themselves as the expression of a new solidarity and an additional factor for bringing peoples closer together for ongoing dialogue among civilizations. The member countries of the Agency try to reflect this ideal of global solidarity through specific activities in such diverse areas as education, training, culture, communication, energy, environment, agriculture, economic development and scientific information, as well as in support for democracy and the state of law.

The ambitious civil and development project that underlies the Agency's activities cannot be carried out properly without increased international cooperation. That is why this institution established cooperation agreements with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1976, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) in 1990, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in 1995 and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 1996.

With UNESCO, in the area of education, the two organizations focus their activities on basic education and the production of teaching materials and manuals. With

UNIDO, cooperation is focused, *inter alia*, on creating and managing small- and medium-sized enterprises and promoting appropriate technologies for developing countries. UNICEF and the Agency have established, among other things, an education and literacy programme for young girls and women living in rural areas in countries. With UNDP, the framework agreement signed in 1996 led to cooperation in such varied fields as cooperation assistance among developing countries, education, culture, environment and energy.

The multifaceted cooperation developed by the Agency with the specialized agencies was crowned with success through the General Assembly's adoption in 1996 of resolution 50/3, which institutionalized cooperation between the Agency and the Organization. In accordance with that the resolution, the United Nations and the Agency have worked together on diverse subjects: the development of the situation in Central Africa and initiatives undertaken on all sides to achieve a settlement to the crisis in the region; electoral assistance to French-speaking countries; and sustainable development, including preparations for the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly devoted to the implementation of Agenda 21.

At the same time, the mutual representation of both organizations at meetings organized by each has increased. Thus, the United Nations Secretary-General took part in the work of the fifth summit of Heads of State and Government of French-speaking countries, held in Cotonou, Benin, in December 1995. The United Nations was also represented at the Conference of Ministers of French-speaking Countries working with the information highway and new information technologies, held at Montreal, Canada, in May 1997, as well as at the meeting of the Francophone Contact Group on the situation in the Great Lakes region, held in June 1997.

Today, the Agency and the French-speaking community are preparing together to enter a new phase, the outlines of which will be defined at the upcoming summit in Hanoi next November. At a time when the United Nations itself is preparing its own reforms in order to meet the imminent millennium with the best assets for success, it is essential to strengthen cooperation and coordination between the two institutions for the good of all parties. The cooperation agreement signed last June by our two Secretaries-General aims at that end. The draft resolution before the Assembly, which was submitted this morning by the Permanent Representative of France, confirms that happy convergence.

Tunisia is happy to reaffirm its support for cooperation between the United Nations and the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation. That cooperation highlights the identity of views and objectives of the two organizations and carries on and consolidates the activities of our Organization at the regional level, particularly in the area of development and development cooperation.

**Mr. Ngo Quang Xuan** (Viet Nam) (*interpretation from French*): I have the honour to speak in support of the valuable ideas contained in the statement made by the Ambassador of France in introducing draft resolution A/52/L.1, designed to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation (ACTC). Viet Nam highly appreciates the effective work done by the Agency, which is why it decided to become a co-sponsor of the draft resolution, on cooperation between the United Nations and the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation.

Over the last 27 years the ACTC has played an increasingly important role in economic and social development, which is making a great contribution to the common goals of the countries that have French as a common language. The ACTC is becoming a meeting point and focus of cooperation between Africa, America, Asia and Europe. It brings its members together within the great French-speaking family, thus creating an important community which participates in the global dialogue. It is also an intergovernmental instrument of a special kind which guarantees the success of cooperation between States and Governments of the francophone community.

The relationship between the Agency and the United Nations goes back a number of years. In 1978 the General Assembly adopted resolution 33/18, inviting the ACTC to participate as an observer in its sessions and in all conferences convened under its aegis of the Assembly, as well as in meetings of its subsidiary organs. Furthermore, a series of cooperation framework agreements in areas of common interest to the ACTC and the subsidiary organs of the United Nations established the relationship between the two parties. The adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 50/3 gave special impetus to that relationship and further strengthened cooperation between United Nations bodies and the ACTC.

Viet Nam is pleased to note that cooperation between the United Nations, its specialized agencies and

other United Nations bodies and programmes and the ACTC over the last two years has produced encouraging achievements in many areas. We are convinced that the strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations and the ACTC serves not only the purposes and principles of the United Nations, but also the current reform process of the United Nations.

*Mr. Jele (South Africa), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

In particular, the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Secretary-General of the ACTC signed a cooperation agreement on 25 June 1997 to strengthen relations between the two intergovernmental organizations, an agreement marking a new stage in their cooperation. Viet Nam is convinced that it will establish a very solid basis for concrete action and the establishment of cooperation projects in the common interests of member countries.

Benefiting from close coordination between the conseil permanent de la Francophonie, the ACTC and other francophone countries, Viet Nam is preparing to host the seventh Francophone Summit in Hanoi in November. This will be the first time the French-speaking community has held its Summit in Asia, a turning point in the history of francophone solidarity. Viet Nam undertakes to do all it can to make the Summit a success and to welcome Heads of States and delegates coming from 49 member countries of the francophone community.

In conclusion, Viet Nam hopes that the United Nations and the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation will continue to enjoy the new spirit of cooperation created by resolution 50/3 in order to deepen and expand cooperation in areas of common interest. My delegation therefore hopes that draft resolution A/52/L.1 will receive the support of all Member States of the United Nations.

**Mr. Lelong** (Haiti) (*interpretation from French*): The delegation of Haiti is pleased to co-sponsor draft resolution A/52/L.1, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation". This is an important question, in which we have a great interest.

Allow me to recall that Haiti was present at the Niamey meeting when a group of 21 States and Governments with French as a common language concluded on 20 March 1970 the Convention establishing the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation. Today, 27 years later, our Agency has grown to become the meeting point for 49 States and Governments from five continents.

Next November the seventh biennial conference of Heads of State and Government of the French-speaking countries will be held in Hanoi. The holding of this conference in Asia is a new symbol of the diverse membership of our community and of the fact that our ranks continue to grow with every summit.

This growth is proof of the Agency's strength and its capacity to accomplish its mandate, which is to support and to develop multilateral cooperation between its members in such areas as education and training, culture and communications, energy, the environment, agriculture, economic development, scientific information and supporting democracy and the rule of law.

The Agency makes its contribution to peace and development along with the United Nations and other organizations. It was in order to highlight the clear complementarity between United Nations and ACTC action for economic, political and social development that in 1978, at the thirty-third session of the General Assembly, the Agency was granted the status of observer, by resolution 33/18.

In line with the spirit of its Charter, the ACTC has established a broad and diverse network of relationships with the United Nations system. It has played an active role in all the conferences and summits organized by the United Nations. For a number of years now it has closely cooperated with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in all its wealth of events and activities.

A framework agreement concluded with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) led to the establishment in 15 French-speaking countries of industrial development programmes designed to aid peoples and sustainable human development, with due regard for conservation of the environment. The ACTC also has cooperation agreements with UNICEF and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in areas of interest to those two institutions. It has cooperated with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for several years now, and recently — last September — the two institutions decided to give fresh impetus to their relationship by signing a new agreement.

It can be seen that the range of the ACTC's activities is broad, with many aspects. The scale of the new challenges facing the international community calls for increased coordination of development policies, and to this the cooperation between the United Nations and the ACTC continues to contribute effectively.

We are convinced that adoption of the draft resolution before the Assembly will strengthen this cooperation.

**Mr. Reyn** (Belgium) (*interpretation from French*): Two years ago this Assembly adopted for the first time a resolution formally recognizing the cooperation between the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation (ACTC) and the United Nations. The resolution inaugurated a new partnership, which we welcomed. The ACTC then opened an office at the United Nations, thus making its presence more visible and making it possible to increase cooperation between the French-speaking countries at the United Nations.

The Agency, which is the organ of the French-speaking countries, and which is also called the Agency for the French-Speaking Community, now includes 44 States and Governments from four continents. This guarantees that within this centre of *francophonie* there is a diversity of cultures and views, which only further highlights the solidarity that emerges from the dialogue.

The primary mission of the ACTC is to promote this dialogue and to ensure cooperation in education, culture and communications, energy, the environment, agriculture, economic development, scientific information and the rule of law. As the United Nations mission is to deal with these problems at the global level, it is logical that there should be an exchange between the ACTC and the United Nations to take advantage of their complementarities.

This partnership is of long standing. The ACTC has enjoyed observer status at the United Nations since 1978, and certain bodies, such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) already had cooperation agreements with the ACTC. We are pleased that other bodies have expressed the desire for such agreements.

The ACTC does not have a political mission as such. However, the ideal of *francophonie*, as formulated in the preamble to the French-Speaking Community Charter, adopted in Marrakesh last December, is freedom and human rights; justice and solidarity; democracy, development and progress.

We believe that in the area of technical support, as well as in the organization of seminars bringing together French-speaking countries, the Agency's contribution can be very valuable and open up promising cooperation. The Agency's existing legal and judicial cooperation in the Great Lakes region is an example of this, and we encourage the Agency to pursue this work in close cooperation with the other actors in the field. We are particularly pleased by the activities undertaken in the field of human rights and by the cooperation agreement with the office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Agreements have been concluded with the United Nations Children's Fund as well as the United Nations Development Programme. We welcome this, as well as the ongoing cooperation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which, because of the two bodies' mutual focus on culture and their long collaboration, is one of the best examples of such cooperation.

Belgium is a sponsor of the draft resolution that France introduced on this item. We are pleased by the impetus that has been given over the last two years to the cooperation between the Organization and the Agency, these two bodies particularly by the signing last June of the cooperation agreement, which seeks to strengthen consultations on all matters of common interest in the political, economic, social, scientific and cultural fields.

We hope that this cooperation will continue to develop, thus making it possible to define areas of specific action where the ACTC can act in support of the United Nations, helping it to accomplish its often difficult tasks. This cooperation will contribute to promoting their common goal, which is to serve the international community.

**Mr. Ka** (Senegal) (*interpretation from French*): The item we are considering today, Cooperation between the United Nations and the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation, is of prime importance to my delegation.

The establishment of the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation (ACTC), on 20 March 1970 in Niamey was a milestone in the realization of the plan to bring together the countries using French as a common

language in a joint project, thus contributing to the expression of solidarity by creating harmonious relations between peoples through a fruitful and ongoing dialogue between their cultures and civilizations.

President Léopold Sédar Senghor, one of the first proponents of this ideal, was also one of the first Heads of State to fight for the establishment of a French-speaking community in a framework of cooperation and solidarity, and open to all. According to President Senghor, that approach would promote the advent of a universal, pan-human civilization that would be nothing more than a meeting-place for giving and for receiving.

The ACTC was created against that backdrop to serve as a suitable framework for meetings, dialogue and convergence within the family of French-speaking countries. Its goal was to lead ultimately to the establishment of a structured community that would participate to varying degrees in various aspects of international activities. The Agency's mandate, therefore, is to promote and develop among its members a multidimensional cooperation in key areas such as education, economic development, environmental conservation, good governance, conflict prevention and the strengthening of the rule of law.

We need hardly stress that the objectives of the Agency are identical to those of the Charter of the United Nations. This is the context for the cooperation between the United Nations and the Agency, whose relationship must necessarily be reflected in the day-to-day life of both institutions.

In its resolution 50/3 of 16 October 1995, the General Assembly noted the complementarity of the activities of the Agency and those of the United Nations and of the programmes of its specialized agencies. As part of the implementation of that resolution, the two institutions set up mechanisms for cooperation — in place since 25 June last — under a cooperation agreement aimed at strengthening their relations on matters of common concern, particularly in the political, economic, scientific and cultural fields. I am convinced that this agreement will enable the ACTC and the United Nations to cooperate more closely in order better to respond to the aspirations of peoples and nations, for whom these two institutions were created.

I therefore call on Member States to support draft resolution A/52/L.1, of which Senegal is a sponsor, and also to support the joint efforts of the United Nations and the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation to consolidate, broaden and deepen their cooperation in the interests of peace and of international solidarity.

**Mr. Wan Chat Kwong** (Mauritius) (*interpretation from French*): My delegation is very pleased to associate itself with the draft resolution introduced by the Permanent Representative of France on cooperation between the United Nations and the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation (ACTC).

Mauritius, a founding member of the ACTC, welcomes the important progress made to date in the relations between the United Nations and the Agency, as evidenced in the information contained in the report of the Secretary-General, for which my delegation is most grateful.

The relationship between the United Nations and the Agency goes back to 1978, when the General Assembly adopted resolution 33/18. But it was in particular at the beginning of this decade and more specifically after the opening of the liaison offices of the Agency at the United Nations, first in Geneva in 1991 and then here in New York in 1995, that this relationship gained new momentum and greater significance.

It was, quite naturally, to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization that the Agency turned in 1976, six years after its founding, to establish its first contacts with one of the members of the family of the United Nations. That relationship was strengthened by the signing in 1990 of an additional protocol to the 1976 cooperation agreement. In the beginning, the Agency strove to give clear priority to the promotion of education in the broadest sense of the word. Literacy, technical training, vocational training and higher education, and in particular higher technical education, were the main concerns of most of the ministers and Heads of State of member States. Today, education and training remain priorities for the Agency. Cultural activities also figured prominently at the 1970 conference, held in Niamey, that established the Agency.

More recently, the Agency concluded cooperation framework agreements with other United Nations bodies, including the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) in November 1990, and, particularly following the adoption of resolution 50/3, with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). That series was supplemented in June by the signing of

a cooperation agreement by the Secretaries-General of the two organizations with a view to strengthening and expanding their relationship.

Together with UNDP and UNIDO, the Agency is carrying out economic development programmes stressing the promotion of micro- and small enterprises, an area in which the Agency has already acquired a certain amount of expertise, particularly in the least developed countries. My delegation would also like to stress the cooperation between UNIDO and the Agency in organizing activities to promote industrial cooperation in the Indian Ocean countries to process products in the areas of fishing, livestock and agriculture. Joint programmes have been carried out with UNICEF that aim to benefit young girls and young women, particularly in the area of education and literacy training. The Agency has also assisted UNICEF in implementing programmes to promote and protect the rights of women and children.

Cooperation between the two organizations should in future probably focus on promoting the rule of law and good governance an on the area of preventive diplomacy. The Agency and the United Nations have for several years been cooperating in the implementation of joint programmes in the field of human rights. Joint efforts have been made, mainly with the Centre for Human Rights in Geneva and UNDP, to strengthen the rule of law and to lend support to the process of democratization and good governance. Contacts between the Agency and the Centre for Human Rights will be developed further, as a new cooperation agreement was signed last month.

The Agency's cooperation with the United Nations has not been confined to carrying out activities in the field. Thanks to its initiative and its material and logistical support, the countries that use French as a common language have held a series of meetings and discussions in the context of the major international conferences held during the past decade under the auspices of the United Nations. We believe that this dialogue among French-speaking countries has made a significant contribution to the success of those world conferences.

Having read the Secretary-General's report, my delegation is convinced that the adoption of this draft resolution will help not only to strengthen the already exemplary relationship between the United Nations and the Agency but also to expand and deepen these relations to the mutual benefit of both organizations and, ultimately, to that of the well-being of the international community as a whole.

Before concluding, I should like, on behalf of my delegation, to pay tribute to the Secretary-General of the Agency, Mr. Jean-Louis Roy, whose term of office will come to an end next December, and to express to him our deep gratitude for his outstanding contribution to bringing about the rapprochement between the United Nations and the Agency.

**Mr. Diatta** (Niger) (*interpretation from French*): As members know, the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation (ACTC) was founded in 1970 at Niamey, the capital of my country, to foster multilateral cooperation among countries that use French as a common language, particularly in the areas of education, culture, training and economic development.

Looking back over the Agency's activities over the past 27 years, we can reaffirm that the ACTC has made a major contribution to the achievement of one of the purposes of the United Nations: international cooperation in the solution of economic, social, intellectual and humanitarian problems with a view to bringing peoples closer together and to strengthen their solidarity.

The Agency's effectiveness has been manifested, *inter alia*, in the considerable support it has provided to developing countries members to develop their educational systems, protect their cultural heritage, protect their environment and develop their economic potential.

It is gratifying that an institution carrying out activities that are so vital for improving the future of human communities established fruitful cooperation with the United Nations at an early stage. The General Assembly granted it observer status in 1978, which enabled the Agency to become more involved in the activities of the Organization and of its subsidiary bodies. But it was the adoption of resolution 50/3 of 16 October 1995, which noted the complementarity of the activities of the two organizations and laid the foundation for a new partnership.

In furtherance of the provisions of that resolution, the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and of the ACTC signed a cooperation agreement on 25 June 1997, by which the two organizations promised to cooperate in areas of common interest, to provide mutual assistance in certain spheres, and to ensure effective liaison between their two secretariats; my delegation welcomes that agreement.

My delegation considers that the ACTC, through its many activities, does indeed have much to contribute to the efforts of the United Nations Secretariat to serve the international community better. The usefulness of the Agency in very specific areas was clearly reflected in the report of the Secretary-General on the item before us today, documents A/52/299 and A/52/299/Add.1 of 27 August 1997 and 16 September 1997 respectively. In reading the report, we were pleased to note that institutions such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization are at present cooperating closely with the ACTC, and that Secretariat structures such as the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department for Economic and Social Affairs have expressed the wish to forge links of cooperation in various sectors.

Here, my delegation welcomes the establishment of cooperation in the areas of democratization and the prevention of conflicts. In those areas the Agency has a wealth of experience to share. Niger and many other African countries can bear witness to this, because most of them are engaged in a process of democratization and have benefitted from activities initiated by the Agency in the areas of assistance with and observation of elections, improving the conditions in which justice is carried out, and promoting and protecting human rights.

Turning to the maintenance of peace and the prevention of conflicts, the Agency has shown its value through its efforts to resolve crises in a number of Francophone countries. Its contacts with the Organization of African Unity — which led in March 1990 to the signing of a framework agreement on cooperation — may be seen in the same light, as they involve coordinating the efforts of the two organizations to strengthen the capacity of African countries to prevent conflicts and to maintain peace on the continent.

My delegation wishes to thank the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, for his excellent report on this agenda item. The information in the report testifies to the vitality of the relationship between the United Nations and the ACTC. The international community should encourage that relationship because it furthers the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Because of all those considerations, my delegation has joined in sponsoring draft resolution A/52/L.1 of 15 October 1997, which the representative of France has just introduced. We are convinced that the draft resolution will enjoy the unanimous support of Member States.

**Mr. Yacoubou** (Benin) (*interpretation from French*): My delegation is happy to join in sponsoring draft resolution A/52/L.1, on cooperation between the United Nations and the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation (ACTC).

It is nearly two years since the official opening in New York, on 25 October 1995, of the Office of the Permanent Observer for the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation to the United Nations; and it has been two years since the General Assembly adopted without a vote, on 16 October 1995, resolution 50/3, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation".

Two years is rather a short time to venture on an assessment of the strengthened cooperation between the two organizations, but I am gratified to note that in 1995 the two-decade relationship between the United Nations and the Agency entered a new phase marked by new agreements between the organizations. Let me give as examples the framework cooperation agreement between the ACTC and the United Nations Children's Fund, signed on 26 October 1995, and the framework cooperation agreement between the ACTC and the United Nations Development Programme, signed on 2 October 1996.

Furthermore, consultations and dialogue have been conducted on a more regular basis between the Secretariats of the two bodies. I should like to mention here the consultations held between senior officials of the United Nations Secretariat and those of the ACTC secretariat. They centred, *inter alia*, on developments in Central Africa and initiatives undertaken by various parties to try to bring about a peaceful settlement to the crisis in the Great Lakes region; electoral assistance to French-speaking countries at their request; and sustainable development, in particular preparatory work for the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly devoted to the review and assessment of the implementation of Agenda 21.

These varied areas of discussion and cooperation attest to the vitality of the relationship and, above all, to the real desire of the United Nations to work with the Agency of the French-speaking communities.

It is highly desirable for the two organizations, at the same time as consolidating their work in fields in which cooperation has already begun, to expand the area of their relationship to new sectors. The goal here is to provide a concrete and effective contribution to improving the living and working conditions of the peoples of the Member States.

In a few weeks my country, Benin, which has chaired the group of francophone countries since it hosted the sixth Summit Conference of countries that use French as a common language in December 1995 at Cotonou, will pass the torch to Viet Nam. It is in Hanoi that our Heads of State and Government will be meeting for the seventh summit of our organization. This will be a further opportunity to press ahead with strengthening our special relationship and to initiate new joint action under the aegis of the United Nations and the ACTC.

Thus, the two organizations will be able to lay down new milestones which will provide the foundations and models for the fruitful partnership the international community desires.

Moreover, the election in Hanoi of the first secretary-general of the French-speaking organization will be a new turning point in the relationship between the United Nations and the ACTC, which within their respective mandates will have to confront the challenges of the twenty-first century.

We are therefore confident about the future of the cooperation between our two institutions and the role that they can play, individually and jointly to encourage peoples to work together in a spirit of solidarity and true partnership with the goal of complete eradication of poverty, which now represents the bad conscience of the human community and the commemoration of which today symbolically coincides with this meeting.

**Mr. Mpay** (Cameroon) (*interpretation from French*): As my delegation is speaking for the first time, allow me to extend our warmest congratulations to Mr. Udovenko on his election to preside over the General Assembly. Our congratulations also go to his predecessor, Ambassador Razali Ismail of Malaysia, for the skill with which he guided our work during the previous session.

My delegation also welcomes the election of Mr. Kofi Annan to the post of Secretary-General of our Organization. Cameroon supports his tireless efforts to adapt the United Nations to the changes and upheavals in the world.

The relationship between the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation (ACTC) and the United Nations goes back a number of years. In 1978, the General Assembly adopted its resolution 33/18 in which it granted the Agency the status of observer. Since then, and under the impetus of its Secretary-General, the Agency has carried out its activities in three main directions, including its general mandate of consensus-building.

In its consensus-building activities, the Agency, while seeking to define a francophone identity, has also given expression to a set of shared values. Its basic mandate is to emphasize and develop multilateral cooperation among its members in areas such as education and training, culture and communication, energy, the environment, agriculture, and so on.

Among the other functions entrusted to it in its charter, the Agency undertakes studies, information, coordination and even action programmes. In that respect it is responsible *inter alia*, for helping Governments to gain full access to sources of bilateral and multilateral cooperation, and to try to maintain ties with international organizations and non-governmental organizations working in the fields where it is active. Given the numerous development problems faced by the French-speaking countries of the South and the modest means made available by the actors in international cooperation, the Agency has set itself the objectives, among others, of ensuring that francophone countries obtain their due share of the investments of international organizations and of providing them with substantial resources through joint financing.

There has therefore been fruitful cooperation between the Agency and the United Nations in the past two years. In this regard, an example is the signing of a framework agreement with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), in addition to the framework agreements concluded with the United Nations and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). One might also refer to the joint work carried out with the United Nations Centre for Human Rights and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) with a view to mutually supporting peacekeeping interventions and the holding of intersectoral meetings with UNESCO in order to devise common approaches in the areas of culture, communication and basic education.

The agreements I have referred to indicate that in the past few years the relationship between the Agency and the organizations of the United Nations system have been strengthened through several synergetic actions. With regard to links between UNESCO and the Agency in the field of culture, to mention but one specific sector, these two organizations are collaborating closely in the implementation of the International Fund for the Promotion of the Study of African Languages and Cultures (FIDELCA) programme. In 1997 UNESCO also took part in organizing the Market for African Art and Entertainment (MASA) which the Agency launched in 1993 in Abidjan.

The implementation of the ACTC/United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) framework agreement has led to the initiation of six joint programmes in 15 French-speaking countries to promote agriculture and industry. These include: support for the establishment of units for the production of agricultural equipment and tools in the countries covered by the Central African Customs and Economic Union; the promotion of industrial cooperation in the Indian Ocean countries for the processing of products of fisheries, animal husbandry and agriculture; and seminars and training sessions on non-polluting industrial project design and the training of trainers in setting up and financing small and medium-sized enterprises.

In cooperation with UNICEF, the Agency has introduced a series of education and literacy programmes for girls and young women in rural areas of Benin, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Viet Nam, Djibouti, Haiti, and other countries.

Several projects are being carried out in implementation of the agreement between the United Nations Development Programme and the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation. These include a programme to support small and medium-sized enterprises in Laos within the framework of the United Nations Capital Development Fund, and the establishment in Togo of a network allowing for the collection, processing and dissemination on the Internet of information relating to sustainable development. In partnership with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Agency has held several seminars on various aspects of human rights issues. Furthermore, consultation and dialogue between the secretariats of these two institutions have increased. The most recent of these discussions relate to current issues, including the development of the political situation in Central Africa and the initiatives undertaken to achieve a peaceful settlement of the crisis in that region; electoral assistance to francophone countries; and sustainable development and the implementation of Agenda 21.

In this light, we are right to welcome the complementary activities between the United Nations and the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation. In principle we could not do otherwise, because these two organizations are working for the well-being of humankind. Therefore, let us hope that their various forms of cooperation will be further strengthened.

That is why my delegation has become a sponsor of draft resolution A/52/L.1, and, like other delegations, we hope that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus.

**Mr. Ould Deddach** (Mauritania) (*interpretation from French*): As this is the first time that I have spoken to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session, I should like to express my satisfaction at seeing Mr. Hennadiy Udovenko presiding over our work. Given his experience and personal qualities, we are sure that, under his guidance, we will achieve positive results.

The institutionalization of cooperation between the United Nations and the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation, which was enshrined in resolution 50/3 of 16 October 1995 during the fiftieth-anniversary session of the United Nations, thus emerging just as our universal Organization reached maturity, needs to be strengthened today even as the United Nations is making a great effort to adapt to the needs of a world in the midst of change.

Indeed, increased cooperation between the two organizations will, we hope, make it possible to establish the foundations for international cooperation that is free from ideological confrontation and resolutely determined to meet its global challenges: economic and social development; strengthening democracy and respect for human rights; the promotion of sustainable development while taking account of the need for environmental conservation; the struggle against the scourge of drugs; and the promotion of gender equality.

It is fortunate that in all these areas the activities of the United Nations have been backed up by the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation, which is pursuing the same goals and defending the same ideal of peace, cooperation and understanding among peoples.

The Agency was created on 20 March 1970 on the basis of a common plan for all countries that use French as a common language, with the aim of giving expression to a new solidarity and an additional factor for bringing people closer together through an ongoing dialogue between civilizations. The Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation has for many years pursued its activities while fully respecting the specific identities of each of its members and participating constructively in global dialogue.

From Rio in 1992 to New York in 1997, via Beijing and other venues, it has participated actively in discussions leading to the adoption of various programmes of action, just as it has supported the participation of its members in these meetings. Heads of State of countries using French as a common language, grouped together in this French-speaking community, decided to establish a new partnership with all the agencies that are members of the United Nations family, thereby stressing the complementarity that exists between the United Nations and francophone movement. In so doing, they gave specific expression to Chapters VIII and IX of the United Nations Charter, which encourage close cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations with the object of creating the necessary conditions of stability and well-being so as to ensure stable, friendly relations among nations conducive to maintaining peace and security.

In this respect, the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation plays a very positive role for the francophone community by promoting multilateral cooperation between its members in areas of common interest for the United Nations, such as the right to development and democracy, education and training and technical cooperation in vital areas such as energy, scientific information and the environment. The Islamic Republic of Mauritania, which has always based its policies on dialogue and friendly discussion, can only be delighted to be associated with an initiative that encourages understanding among nations and peoples.

Mauritania is both an Arab and an African country with a diverse cultural heritage, and my country considers its vocation to be active participation within an organization that, while respecting cultural diversity, advocates a fruitful dialogue for the benefit of all its members for the preservation of peace and stability.

That is why we are happy to co-sponsor draft resolution A/52/L.1, which is before the Assembly, and we hope that it will be adopted by consensus.

**Mr. Ravou-Akii** (Vanuatu) (*interpretation from French*): On behalf of my delegation, I should like to congratulate the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his report entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation", contained in document A/52/299 of 27 August 1997 and its addendum 1 of 16 September 1997, now being considered under agenda item 22 of the General Assembly at its fifty-second session.

The activities of the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation (ACTC) can be clearly seen in the field within the territory of the Republic of Vanuatu in three areas: first, in the area of renewable energy sources; secondly, in training art and primary level teachers; and lastly in the training of magistrates.

Let us first consider the area of renewable energy sources. The Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation, with the vigorous participation of countries using French as a common language, is at present implementing a vast solar-energy electrification programme for elementary schools in Vanuatu. Some elements of that programme are being carried out in the field in accordance with paragraph 14 of the Secretary-General's aforementioned report. These are joint activities between the ACTC and the United Nations Development Programme.

Primary school teachers in the French language receive training at the Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau in Hanoi.

Finally, French-speaking magistrates in the Republic of Vanuatu at present receive training outside the Republic. The Government looks forward to the setting up, in agreement with the Agency, of training structures for such magistrates within the existing legal training system of the South Pacific University, whose headquarters are in Vanuatu.

The Republic of Vanuatu supports cooperation between the United Nations and the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation, and is pleased to be among the sponsors of draft resolution A/52/L.1, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation", introduced by the Permanent Representative of the French Republic. We hope that the Assembly will adopt it unanimously.

**The Acting President:** In accordance with General Assembly resolution 33/18 of 10 November 1978, I now call on Mr. Jean Louis Roy, Secretary-General of the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation.

**Mr. Roy** (Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation) *(interpretation from French):* The objectives of peace, security and development pursued by the United Nations are at the very basis of the francophone project described by the founders of the intergovernmental francophone organization in Niamey in 1970. In its 27 years of existence since then, it has become a real dynamo of progress based on common values, notably those of democracy and the rule of law. It brings together a community of more than 400 million persons in Europe, Africa, America and Asia.

Our community is diverse spiritually, culturally and linguistically. But it has progressively defined the components of its unity, which are the rule of law in conditions of sustainable development. The two are inseparable.

Many times during the biennial conferences held since 1986 the Heads of State and Government of countries that use French as a common language — one country out of four in the world — have recognized the role of multilateralism in the new international context and confirmed their will to help find a solution to global political and economic problems. They had hoped for this new partnership, based on concrete objectives, with all the members of the United Nations system, this new partnership that brings us together today.

It was in this spirit that at the fiftieth session of the General Assembly the countries of the French-speaking community within the United Nations — several of which have spoken in this debate — took the initiative of seeking to include a new item on the agenda, which resulted in a resolution calling on our two Organizations, the United Nations and the Agency, to explore means of closer cooperation to allow a pooling of their human, technical and financial resources for the benefit of the peace and development of the international community in general and of the French-speaking community, in particular. The resolution noted the achievements of the two Organizations and sought to show the way ahead.

As several speakers have noted, we have for long, as mandated, been drawing closer to the United Nations, particularly during the long, important sequence of international gatherings, which has guided us all, from the World Summit for Children, held in this Hall, to the Rio + 5 Conference, which also took place here a few weeks ago; by way of Rio again; Vienna — the World Conference on Human Rights; Barbados — the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States; Tokyo — the International Conference on African Development; Cairo — the International Conference on Population and Development; Copenhagen — the World Summit for Social Development; Rome — the World Food Summit, 1996; and, finally, Rome again — the First Conference of the Parties to the International Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, which has just taken place. At each of these conferences the Agency and its francophone partners have closely followed the United Nations lead and enriched its efforts. We have sought to ensure that all the French-speaking countries take part in every stage in the preparation, holding and follow-up of these world conferences.

In addition to being involved in these conferences, we have long sought to bring out specific synergies with the United Nations system on the ground. Francophone cooperation is marked by a strong desire for specific, useful and visible action. We are pleased that many countries have mentioned this in referring to a number of our Agency's programmes and their deployment in their countries and regions.

For us, cooperation is like an investment. We need to see a return from our investments somewhere. We have therefore established with the United Nations system, in all cases with specific objectives, synergies on the ground. As many speakers have recalled we worked first with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in the area of education, centring our joint activities around basic education, distance learning and new information technology — in brief, it is clear, around the main areas of culture, seeking to align culture and economy, as was the case in 1993, 1995 and 1997, with the three Markets for African Art and Entertainment.

Similar thinking applied in our relations with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), with which a framework agreement was signed in 1990. As several speakers have recalled, it sought to strengthen cooperation between developing countries; to organize solid training in the matter of industrial management, maintenance and research; and to support the creation and management of enterprises,

feasibility studies and the promotion of investment. This is major work, in particular in the area of technology linked to communications and in other areas that the report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations covers.

These are the fruits of the cooperation between the two Organizations before 1995, when the resolution that everyone has mentioned, resolution 50/3, was adopted. Since then, in the spirit mentioned earlier, particularly by the Permanent Representative of France, we have pooled considerable resources with those of the United Nations over the last two years. In June this year Mr. Kofi Annan and I signed an agreement on strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and the ACTC. The agreement took note of many agreements with bodies in the United Nations family, bringing together agreements signed with Mrs. Carol Bellamy, Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund, in October 1995 and October 1996 and with Mr. Speth, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, in October 1996. In every case, the agreements were designed to pool the resources of the two Organizations for specific activities in a particular country or region, or in many countries. In Geneva recently I also had the honour to sign an important agreement with the Administrator in Charge of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, which provides for joint action to strengthen the rule of law, promote and protect human rights, strengthen democracy and so forth.

On our initiative, on 29 September there was a meeting at our headquarters in Paris of United Nations officials who deal with electoral assistance, peacekeeping and the consolidation of peace and support for the rule of law. The joint activities we have already carried out convince me that that meeting will pave the way to a new and higher level of cooperation in these most fundamental areas.

The draft resolution before the Assembly, while noting with satisfaction the encouraging progress in cooperation between the United Nations and the Agency, includes many important areas of cooperation we can explore in the future. It also illustrates — as needs to be done from time to time — the fruitfulness of multilateralism in world affairs. I hope that the momentum generated by resolution 50/3 can be maintained, consolidated and increased. Our Heads of State and Government have expressed this hope on several occasions, as have many delegations that have made statements and sponsored the draft resolution.

I hope that the francophone delegations and the delegations from other regions that have been good enough to hear what we have had to say about cooperation between francophonie and the United Nations will accept my gratitude for the kind words expressed this morning on the Agency's work and achievements, and for their active support for strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and the Agency for the French-Speaking Community. I feel certain that the cooperation between the two Organizations will be reinforced by the work and decisions of the Seventh Summit of the Heads of State and Government of countries that are linked by their common usage of the French language, which will be held in Hanoi from 14 to 16 November.

I reserve my warmest thanks for the men and women in the United Nations system who have given meaning, direction and substance to the bond proclaimed in General Assembly resolution 50/3, which called on the United Nations and the ACTC to pool their resources to consolidate conditions in which we may have peace for development and to meet the universal need to live together, equal but different.

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/52/L.1.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

**Mr. Perfiliev** (Director, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council Affairs Division) (*interpretation from French*): Should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/52/L.1, there will be no programme budget implications.

**The Acting President**: May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/52/L.1?

*Draft resolution A/52/L.1 was adopted* (resolution 52/2).

**The Acting President**: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 22?

*It was so decided.*

**Agenda item 46** (*continued*)

**Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development**

**Report of the Secretary-General (A/52/305)**

**Mr. Samhan** (United Arab Emirates) (*interpretation from Arabic*): It gives me pleasure, on behalf of the delegation of the United Arab Emirates, to join preceding speakers in expressing thanks and appreciation to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development. The valuable information it contains will serve us well in our deliberations. I would also like to express our support for the statement made by the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on this item.

Our review of the outcome of the Copenhagen Summit gives expression to the will of the international community to deal with social phenomena and the radical changes in the international environment, with their social and economic ramifications affecting all societies.

Heads of State and Government have welcomed the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action and expressed the importance of achieving the goals of sustainable development and the welfare of the individual. They have also reviewed various factors relevant to this question. Nevertheless, a feeling of concern and anxiety continues to cast its shadow on the world environment as a result of the growing social and developmental challenges and the widening economic and social gaps between the developed and the developing countries. This has contributed greatly to widespread poverty, illiteracy and unemployment.

Some statistics have recently indicated that across the world 1.2 billion people live below the poverty line, lacking the most basic necessities such as food, drinking-water, health and education services, and so on.

The United Arab Emirates declares its support for the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, as a new mechanism for increasing international and national awareness of social problems, one which will promote a joint approach to containing the growing challenges.

At the same time, my country reaffirms the pressing importance of the promotion of wide-ranging global and regional cooperation, based on shared perceptions within a broad framework, in order to address social, economic and developmental problems and to ensure the protection of human rights and other basic freedoms.

The linkage between various styles of social development and the growth of regional and local armed conflicts, illegal drug trafficking, and organized crime and violence has increased the difficulty of solving social problems. These challenges have indeed crossed national boundaries to become global issues, and Governments are less able than ever to deal with them alone, without cooperation and mutual coordination, whether on the bilateral, regional or international level. Therefore, we reiterate that the support and continued collective commitment of the international community is an urgent necessity.

There is an equally urgent need for promoting joint efforts to achieve development and to deal with the continued decrease of official development assistance provided by donor countries to the developing world. All of these factors continue to hamper the implementation of various strategies and programmes aimed at effecting developmental and social reforms.

In this context, the United Arab Emirates considers that family-related concerns — the well-being of women, children, the elderly and the disabled — and health and education services are issues of growing importance resulting from continuing challenges in the field of development in many regions, particularly in the developing countries. We therefore call for concerted global efforts to create an international environment characterized by equity and justice, in order to achieve humanity's aspirations for peace, security, stability and development.

At the same time we support the recommendations adopted by the Commission for Social Development, which are aimed at increasing productive employment, reducing unemployment, and improving social services for all sectors of society without exception and on the basis of sustainability and justice.

It is our hope that every effort will be made to ensure the success of the special session of the General Assembly to review and assess the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development, to be held in the year 2000.

In this regard, we would like to reaffirm anew the importance of strengthening the role of the United

Nations and its specialized agencies and other international development organizations in order to play a more effective part, especially in the social, economic and development fields.

On the instructions of His Highness Sheikh Zayed ibn Sultan Al Nuhayyan, Head of State of the United Arab Emirates, my country has pursued development policies and measures which are consonant with international and national variables, and which are harmonious with our beliefs, our heritage and our traditions, emanating from the tolerant Islamic shariah.

As part of its commitment to the implementation of the outcome of the Copenhagen Summit, the United Arab Emirates has developed new legislation and changed some of its systems for social and economic development, in order to implement ambitious development programmes aimed at the development of human resources, as well as education, health, cultural and training programmes. It has allocated the necessary financial and psychological support resources to provide training programmes for the rehabilitation of the elderly and the disabled, in order to ensure their integration into the society and their effective participation in development programmes.

We also concentrate on development of the participation of the private sector in the training of local human resources and the implementation of national policies and programmes for socio-economic development. My country provides employment opportunities for all its citizens, men and women alike, in order to raise the standard of living of the citizens and to adopt a new scientific approach for managing their daily life.

As an expression of its conviction of the need for linking economic objectives to the goals of comprehensive social development with its human and civilizational dimensions, our country continues to develop rural areas and link them to cities through the modernization of a vast network of roads. This is in addition to the provision of electricity, drinking-water and acceptable housing in all parts of the country. We continue to develop social care programmes in order to achieve a qualitative leap in the standard of living for various sectors of our society and to promote and consolidate the concepts of social and family integration.

We do not confine ourselves to the local level alone; rather, our efforts extend to cooperation with regional, bilateral and international development programmes. My country has participated in the implementation and financing of some social projects in several developing countries. It has given soft loans to other developing countries, to enable them to meet the basic needs of their citizens in the field of social services.

We have participated in cooperative social and developmental endeavours by hosting many conferences, seminars and training programmes on social issues, the environment, population and other development-related matters. We look forward to participating in the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth to be held in Lisbon next August.

Finally, my delegation hopes that the efforts of the international community will rise to meet the challenge, in order to achieve the comprehensive objectives contained in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Work.

**Mr. Yel'chenko** (Ukraine): The past decade has been marked by a number of important global conferences, among which the 1995 Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development was of special importance. Much has happened since then, but we have good reasons for stating that the follow-up to it has not met our expectations.

That is why our delegation is very hopeful that the special session of the United Nations General Assembly in the year 2000, which will undertake an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the Copenhagen Summit, will be the main test in evaluating the capacity of the community of nations to respond properly and adequately to the major social challenges of the present day and to fulfil its Charter commitments.

In preparing for the special session the Governments of Member States should demonstrate their political will in practical terms by intensifying their efforts to eliminate poverty in general, eradicate absolute poverty, increase employment and decrease unemployment and by deepening social integration in their respective countries.

In a letter addressed to the United Nations Secretary-General in March 1996, the President of Ukraine outlined the measures undertaken by our country at the national level to implement the decisions of the Copenhagen Summit. Subsequently, the Presidential decree on the main tendencies of the activities of the State executive power of Ukraine in the implementation of the final documents of the World Summit for Social Development" was promulgated. The recent

establishment within the Government of Ukraine of the post of Vice-Prime Minister for Labour and Social Policy, the creation of a Ministry on Family and Youth and the adoption of a range of programme documents are further evidence of the consistency of Ukraine's social policy and its international commitments.

The Government of Ukraine continues to focus its efforts on the problems of youth and the elderly, as well as on measures for the follow-up to the International Year of the Family, the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty and on preparations for the International Year of Older Persons in 1999. In the context of the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, the Ukrainian Government has established a system to monitor poverty and to collect and review data and information relating to its root causes and the different forms it takes.

Today, 17 October, we are commemorating the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. According to statistical reports, more than 1.3 billion people are now living on less than $1 a day, and 2 billion more are only marginally better off. This is a disturbing situation which the United Nations should take very seriously. As we may recall, the participants in the World Summit for Social Development committed themselves to the goal of eradicating poverty as an ethical, social, political and economic imperative of humankind. In this regard, we support the activity of the newly established Department for Economic and Social Affairs aimed at assisting in the implementation of the follow-up to the Summit. Our delegation would also like to welcome the joint efforts of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Population Fund and other interested bodies in supporting national anti-poverty strategies.

Today the United Nations is undergoing a complicated process of reform. The time has come for the Organization to change and to be more responsive to the new challenges of the permanently changing world. In our view, notwithstanding certain shortcomings, the proposals of the Secretary-General to reorganize the United Nations structure and programme activities, particularly in the social and economic fields, deserve our full support. We are confident that the United Nations should not only continue to focus on strengthening international cooperation in the field of social and economic development, but that it should be the leader in such activities.

My delegation also notes with satisfaction the revitalization of the activities of the United Nations Commission for Social Development, which has been entrusted with the basic responsibility for exercising control over the implementation of the decisions of the Copenhagen Summit.

The work of the last session of the Commission in the new format has produced quite positive results, among them the adoption of a number of constructive and balanced resolutions on such important issues as productive employment, the International Year of Older Persons, measures for the follow-up to the International Year of the Family and so on. We encourage the United Nations Secretariat to continue with measures to promote further development of the new forms of the Commission's activities.

Finally, I am authorized to state here that Ukraine reaffirms its full commitment to the obligations undertaken at the World Summit for Social Development. Our country stands ready to contribute actively and constructively to the preparation of the special session of the General Assembly for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development.

**Mr. Mabilangan** (Philippines): During the preparatory process for the World Summit for Social Development, the Philippines played host to the Fourth Asian and Pacific Ministerial Conference on Social Development of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), which resulted in the Manila Declaration that called for the eradication of poverty by the year 2010.

From 5 to 11 November of this year the Philippines will once again serve as host to the Fifth Asian and Pacific Ministerial Conference on Social Development of ESCAP to review the national progress achieved and regional action taken in the implementation of the Agenda for Action for Social Development in the ESCAP region within the context of the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development.

Last year, 18 economic leaders of members of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (APEC) gathered in the Philippines for the Fourth APEC summit, where they agreed to enhance economic-cooperation initiatives in the Pacific region. The APEC leaders' Declaration of Subic included such social-development issues as human-resource development, women and youth as part of APEC's concerns.

On the subject of youth, the Philippines welcomes Portugal's initiative to host the first World Conference of Ministers for Youth in August 1998 at Lisbon, and we believe that that will be an opportune time to assess the programme of action for youth and to set directions for the future.

Consistent with its international commitments, the Philippines, under the leadership of President Fidel V. Ramos, has intensified implementation of the Social Reform Agenda (SRA), the blueprint of Philippine social development.

The Philippine SRA, which was formulated in 1994, was effectively expanded to improve the lives of ordinary people and ensure that they achieve a quality of life that gives them dignity, hope and the power of choice. It provides concrete, cross-sectoral, time-bound strategies to eradicate poverty, focusing on three major agendas, namely, access to quality basic services, access to productive resources and asset reforms and institution building and participation in governance.

With full employment as our goal, the Philippines has embarked upon a comprehensive employment-strategy programme to provide more jobs and livelihood opportunities, promote the rights and welfare of the labour sector and enhance human-resource development with new approaches to developing a competitive work force prepared to meet the challenges of globalization.

The Philippines has carefully studied the Secretary-General's report, for which we thank him, on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development (A/52/305) and the report on the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (A/52/315).

It is evident from the Secretary-General's reports that many countries have made serious efforts in implementing the outcome of the Social Summit. We should encourage the process of informing the international community of the activities pursued by individual countries to implement the outcome of the Summit so that we can share and learn from each others' experiences. In this regard, the Commission for Social Development should develop an appropriate reporting format that would ensure a better appreciation of country activities implementing the specific results of the Summit. It would not be enough to simply summarize pertinent national activities. These activities could be clustered in accordance with the specific recommendations of the Summit.

In a similar vein, we expect organized and coherent data on the specific implementations of the Summit relative to the role of the United Nations and other international organizations and agencies, the non-governmental organizations and the donor community.

The question of resources is of course a central concern in the implementation of the outcome. Unless countries have the required resources, the outcome of the Social Summit will remain a distant blueprint for action. It is of course the principal responsibility of countries themselves to provide the resources for their social development, and the developing countries have done their best, given the various economic and structural constraints confronting them.

The Social Summit emphasized the role of partnership with other development actors, including the donor community, in forging collaborative approaches to promoting social progress and development. It is in this regard that there were some expectations for official development assistance to increase. Instead, the reverse has occurred. The level of official development assistance has continuously declined over the past five years. It must be realized that official development assistance is an essential part of the cost-sharing needed in the global partnership to address priority global social concerns such as poverty eradication, not to mention that such a source of external finance is critical to many capital-starved countries, and also to the least developed countries.

In his report to the 1997 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council in document A/52/203, the Secretary-General made reference to innovative ideas for generating funds for globally agreed commitments and priorities. That report had a number of thought-provoking proposals on public-private partnerships in mobilizing finance for achieving development objectives. My delegation believes that the subject should be revisited by the Economic and Social Council, as it did not have sufficient time then to consider the matter.

My delegation also believes that the Commission for Social Development itself must look into the various possibilities of generating or mobilizing resources for activities in response to the Social Summit. Although we agree, for instance, on the focus of the next session of the Commission for Social Development on such topics as promoting social integration, enhancing social protection, violence, crime and the problem of illicit drugs, it may have a better perspective on the financing requirements for specific activities in response to the

Social Summit outcome and where to find such financial resources.

My delegation is glad to note that early preparations are now being planned for the special session in the year 2000 for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the Social Summit. We support the recommendation that the preparatory committee of the whole of the General Assembly be established during the current session of the Assembly and that an organizational session of that committee be held as early as possible in 1998.

In order to ensure a very successful review and appraisal of the outcome of the Social Summit in the year 2000, it would be essential to commence the substantive preparations as soon as possible. It would also be necessary to arrange various activities beyond those mentioned in document A/52/305 and involving the participation of non-governmental organizations, academic and research organizations, business communities and other members of civil society that will support the process leading to the convening of the special session of the General Assembly in the year 2000.

While we applaud the notable gains achieved thus far since the Copenhagen Summit, we cannot overemphasize the enormity of the task still before us. The international community must prove equal to the challenge. It must be able to demonstrate the required political will and provide the necessary resources for the full implementation of the outcome of the Summit.

**Ms. Camerano** (Colombia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Colombia fully agrees with the decision by the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly to have the Commission for Social Development carry out the follow-up to the implementation of the outcome of the Copenhagen Summit. We congratulate the Economic and Social Council for the seriousness with which it has fulfilled that decision, as can be seen in the multi-year work programme, the opening of its discussions to experts on relevant issues and the emphasis placed on drafting practical measures to achieve the implementation of the Summit's recommendations.

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean sponsored the First Regional Conference in Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development in April 1997, in accordance with resolution 51/202. Colombia participated in that Conference and contributed to the drafting of the São Paulo Consensus.

In assessing Colombia's achievements in connection with the basic themes of the Summit, we find that the social policies known as the "social leap" promoted by the Government of President Ernesto Samper coincide with the tenets and endorse the goals of the Copenhagen Declaration in its establishment of policies and programmes to eradicate global poverty.

We have established as a fundamental element of our social policy a "Network for Social Solidarity". This was conceived as an instrument to improve the quality of life of the most vulnerable sectors of Colombian society. Social spending between 1994 and 1998 rose to 41.8 per cent of the total, as compared to 36.9 per cent in the previous four-year period. Major budget resources are earmarked for basic education, the health-care system and programmes under the Network for Solidarity, among which stand out those related to recreation and well-being, as well as national strategies for the development of indigenous and Afro-Colombian peoples, which involve programmes for the social integration of these ethnic groups that link them to national social and economic development projects.

Colombia endorses the view that we should stimulate national initiatives for social development through credits for persons living in poverty and the provision of low-cost housing.

The eradication of absolute poverty as a goal of the Colombian Development Plan is a prime objective of the policies and actions of the Government. This is why Colombia welcomes the appeals by the General Assembly to unite national efforts and international cooperation in order to resolve this problem.

Colombia believes the international community's financial initiatives and activities to provide assistance for social development — including the programmes of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) — are of great importance, as is the appeal to developed countries to earmark 0.7 per cent of their gross national product for official development assistance. Similarly, we insist that the international community should be committed to carry out the 20/20 programme for the development of basic social programmes. The freeing up of resources devoted to military purposes is an additional source of financing for development.

Multilateral debt is a serious burden that encumbers the economies of a great number of poor countries, hampering their economic development and leaving them

without sufficient capital for social and human development. The IMF and the World Bank have made an important advance in recognizing that the poorest and most-indebted countries find it difficult to meet their commitments, in particular their multilateral commitments. But in so doing these institutions have recognized, out of 41 extremely indebted countries, only eight countries as having unsustainable debts and 12 as seriously indebted.

Without a doubt, as a part of development financing, external debt will continue to be one of the main problems of global finance, economics and politics. But the way we deal with this problem can improve if we pursue the changes that are already taking place or could take place in the political decisions of the creditor and debtor countries.

To finance social infrastructure in the areas of education and preventive and curative medicine, the developing countries receive financing from only the World Bank, the International Development Association and internal savings. Foreign capital, whether through external credit or foreign investment, is not providing financing for social projects. Regarding social-sector financing for the developing countries, Colombia agrees with the views expressed recently in the Second Committee by a professor at the University of Toronto, Gerald Helleiner. He recommends that World Bank credits for social infrastructure in the areas of education and preventive and curative medicine should finance more than 50 per cent of the costs of projects, and that the World Bank should increase cooperation in the training of experts in the preparation and implementation of social programmes.

In fact, when dealing with extremely poor populations, Colombia has changed its co-financing rates, requesting only 5 per cent investment, the remaining 95 per cent coming from loans from State institutions established for this purpose.

It is important to increase the level of internal control over the fiscal management of projects. This is necessary so that reports on what has been achieved can provide not only a quantification of the financial investment but also real information as to the projects physically carried out, their quality and the population that has benefited from them.

Resources for international technical cooperation have declined. The move to market-based development has been accompanied by attempts to transfer to the private sector the burden of cooperation for international development. As the Non-Aligned Countries did at the Cartagena Summit Conference, Colombia here reaffirms the role of the State in development and in international cooperation for development.

As the Non-Aligned Movement also recognized at Cartagena, the post-cold-war era provides opportunities and challenges for the dialogue on international economic cooperation. To deal with development, focusing both on economic growth and the eradication of poverty, there will have to be greater coordination among developing countries in order to strengthen their capacity to act and to bring an integrated approach to dealing with new problems. We cannot accept attempts to use issues such as environmental protection, intellectual property, the protection of human rights and investments to restrict developing countries' access to markets or to assistance and technology.

The struggle of developing countries to eradicate poverty, achieve economic and social progress and attain conditions of sustained economic growth and sustainable development has as a prerequisite *sine qua non* the establishment of a more propitious and dynamic economic environment.

Colombia fully agrees with two particularly important aspects of the General Assembly resolutions. There must be an integrated approach to the implementation of the results of the Summit within the framework of a coordinated follow-up of the major international conferences in the economic, social and related fields. Also, it is essential that the International Labour Organization be assigned to act in the employment sphere, which is fundamental in dealing with the problem of social development.

**Mr. Alhitti** (Iraq) (*interpretation from Arabic*): We welcome the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the recommendations of the World Summit for Social Development.

Particularly since the end of the cold war, all the States of the world, and especially the developing and least-developed countries, have given growing importance to the question of social and economic development. This trend is certainly right and appropriate, and given the direct relationship between development and international security and stability, it requires increased moral and material support and participation of all parties. The question of development is not just a question for the third world, but for all the countries of the world, because the advantages of stability and international

security, which are strengthened by development and its advantages, benefit all countries of the world without exception, guaranteeing an environment of peace and security. This, in turn, has a positive impact on development. And thus the cycle of poverty, hunger and underdevelopment can be broken and replaced by a cycle that will harmoniously lead all of humanity toward greater development, progress and prosperity.

It might be useful here to stress one truism of which we are all aware: development cannot be achieved without the effective deployment of all material means and human resources. As regards material means, international commercial relations have currently reached an important turning point, as a result of the economic-growth imbalance between North and South that we have experienced in recent decades. A large portion of the population of the South is now overwhelmed by debt, poverty and underdevelopment. Further, there is a great disparity in technological development and progress between North and South, and this has produced serious problems that are hamstringing the development of the countries of the South. The counterpart is that the developed countries are accumulating wealth and exploiting the raw materials and resources of the developing countries. All these factors, separately and together, are contributing to a greater deterioration of social development in many countries of the world.

In the area of the development of human resources, the situation is as grave as that involving material means, because illiteracy, poverty, hunger and disease, as well as discrimination, are continuing to spread in many countries. This has a very negative impact on development.

With regard to the implementation by Iraq of the recommendations of the Copenhagen Summit, I regret to inform the Assembly that my country has not been able to implement any because of the economic sanctions that have been imposed upon it. Also, there is a need to re-examine many of the negative practices that are without doubt hampering development, if not stopping it completely.

We wish to draw attention to the regrettable fact that the negative role played by certain United Nations agencies has hampered or even blocked the development of certain developing countries through the imposition of economic sanctions against their peoples, which has had an overall negative effect on the development process and on the inhabitants of those countries.

We are not making these problems up. The Secretary-General dealt in a detailed manner with the question of sanctions in his report, "Supplement to an Agenda for Peace":

> "They can conflict with the development objectives of the Organization and do long-term damage to the productive capacity of the target country. They can have a severe effect on other countries that are neighbours or major economic partners of the target country." *(A/50/60, para. 70)*

I would mention also the most recent report of the General Assembly Subgroup on the Question of United Nations-imposed Sanctions, which recommended rigour and caution in the imposition of sanctions against States. That Subgroup advised that sanctions be resorted to only when all peaceful means of settling disputes have been exhausted; that did not happen in the case of Iraq. It highlighted the need to define conditions for the imposition, lifting and duration of sanctions and to take all necessary measures to protect civilians and the development of the target country. That did not happen either in the case of Iraq; a sort of *carte blanche* blockade of indeterminate duration has been imposed against my country. Mrs. Graça Machel, the expert of the Secretary-General, reached the same conclusion in her report on the impact of armed conflict on children (A/51/306), which was submitted to the General Assembly last year.

The unrestricted use of economic sanctions in recent years has made it clear that the Charter of the United Nations has serious shortcomings in the area of sanctions with respect to their application and scope; their impact on development and human rights in the target country, including the right to food, medicine, education and employment; and mechanisms for easing or lifting them. That shortcoming has allowed certain countries within the Security Council to transform sanctions — measures that should be resorted to only in exceptional cases in order to resolve international conflicts — into a tool of revenge used to starve peoples, to impede their development programmes, and in some cases even to set back their development.

A brief review of the nature of these sanctions shows to what extent they have been applied so as to deprive the Iraqi people of their most basic human rights along with their right to development. For instance, the sanctions Committee has refused to grant to Iraq the right to buy tires, children's pencils, ambulances or water-

purification products because one Committee member claims that these basic necessities strengthen Iraq's infrastructure and also that they could be used for other purposes. It is as if he were saying that his country does not want Iraq to possess a solid economic infrastructure and that his Government wishes to destroy our country's economy.

We wish to state briefly our belief that sanctions and the manner in which they are applied call into question the credibility of the Organization, its code of ethics and the spirit of its Charter and of its provisions. Sanctions are an inhumane and ineffective tool because the countries — members of the Security Council — that have resorted to their imposition have done so by using the United Nations to achieve their own political goals, which are incompatible with the objectives of the Organization in promoting international peace, stability and security and fruitful cooperation among States.

A quick look at United Nations resolutions and at the reports of international and non-governmental bodies makes clear the very serious impact that the blockade has had on development and in particular on the population. There is not the shadow of a doubt that the negative impact of the sanctions has by far overshadowed any possible gain. Numbers and statistics bear this out, indicating that five times as many people died as a direct result of the economic blockade as did in the bombing of Hiroshima. The blockade, therefore, is a weapon of mass destruction. And that is not to mention the country's stalled development, the deterioration of the educational system, illiteracy, widespread poverty and famine.

This process of destruction is a premeditated form of genocide against the people of Iraq and therefore a practice that runs counter to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. For instance, recent statistics show that last June, more than 4,434 children under the age of 5 died, as against 593 in 1989; and more than 6,460 children over the age of 5 died, as against 1,685 in 1989.

One day we will have to ask ourselves how the various United Nations agencies have dealt with the economic and social development of a country victimized by outdated resolutions that have no moral or legal basis.

**Mr. Somavía** (Chile) (*interpretation from Spanish*): It is an honour and a pleasure for me to comment, on behalf of Chile, on agenda item 46, "Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development". I should like at the outset to state that we support the important statements on this item made by Tanzania on behalf of the Group of 77 and by Paraguay on behalf of the Rio Group.

I should like at this point to take stock of what has been achieved since the holding of the World Summit for Social Development and also to look to the future, to Copenhagen + 5, to the special session of the General Assembly to be held in the year 2000, in order to assess the commitments entered into in the Declaration and Programme of Action and to develop them further.

Why must we look to the near future at this stage? First of all, because only by having clear in mind our long-term, fundamental objectives can we ensure that the manner in which the Summit is being implemented is in keeping with what was actually agreed in Copenhagen. Secondly, because Rio + 5 — although outstanding in terms of the high level of participation and the confirmation of the United Nations as the international forum for dealing with the question of the environment — was not as successful as many of us had hoped. That was because we basically repeated the exercise that took place five years ago in Rio — reopening negotiations on the text of a document that had already been agreed to, or simply repeating language that had been used in the past.

This must not happen with Copenhagen + 5. We cannot confine ourselves, at the special session of the General Assembly — which will coincide with the beginning of the twenty-first century — to negotiating once again commitments that have already been entered into. Rather, we should take this opportunity to commemorate the fifth anniversary of the Summit in a completely innovative fashion.

I believe that it is possible to plan a special session that would be different from the routine, one that would focus on adopting a considerable number of major initiatives to implement the outcome of the Summit — action-oriented initiatives, and initiatives of implementation — and on negotiations not on texts but on specific action at the national, regional and international levels. Let me share some of my ideas about what a session on specific initiatives should look like.

First of all, such a session should ideally have the ability to bring together all the real actors: Governments, parliaments, political parties, labour, business, banks,

financial institutions, civil-society organizations, religious leaders, mayors, local leaders and the media. We must make use of their imagination and their sense of collective responsibility. If we genuinely want to implement the Copenhagen documents, each of them will have a major role to play — not only Governments, which must set the framework, but also individual actors with the means and the tools at the level of their own activities to achieve the Summit objectives.

We must recall that the Social Summit was an intergovernmental meeting with many parallel activities; this was a traditional way of organizing such a conference. But I would like to see an Assembly session that would bring together all these other actors, so that they too could promote and adopt initiatives within the scope of their respective activities. In other words, the United Nations should provide a space in which society as a whole can share in the work of implementing the outcome of the Social Summit, with its own projects. We must be ambitious, as we were with the World Summit itself; we can thus achieve goals we thought difficult to attain.

At that session I would want to see the world's greatest concentration of social actors, working together on the central issue: people. Only the United Nations can do this. The Copenhagen Summit was the greatest meeting of Heads of State in history; why can we not do the same for social actors?

Let me speak of some initiatives that the year-2000 special session could promote. First, we could formulate a legally binding convention aimed at the eradication of poverty. We discussed this during the Summit's preparatory process, but many felt that it was premature and that we first needed the political commitment to eradicate poverty. That was achieved with the Copenhagen Declaration. This worldwide commitment already provides a rallying point; now we must move forward and make it legally binding within a realistic time-frame.

Second, we could work to ensure the integrated development of grass-roots communities. Would it really be utterly impossible for us to focus on the 20 per cent of the world's communities that are the neediest, and to take targeted action based on the needs they themselves define, thus to eliminate absolute poverty, to create local jobs, to stimulate microcredit, to eliminate violence, to set up health centres, and to fill other basic needs at the community level? In short, we must address the diverse basic problems affecting people living on the edge. These are issues that need to be dealt with both at the local and municipal levels and at the national level. Here, a commitment by local authorities is fundamentally important.

Third, a critical issue underscored at Rio+5 was the degree of subsidy required by non-sustainable development. We must study current financial systems, which are full of inconsistencies and anomalies, and provide incentives for sustainable development. We must understand the true impact of today's financial system; otherwise, we will be unable to use it to provide incentives for overall development. We need "friendly" financial systems to create jobs and to care for the environment.

Fourth, we must develop new ways of using private capital to meet social needs — not as charity, but as good business. It is important to recall that the business sector participated actively in the World Summit process. We must recognize that the notion that private capital can provide goods and services to meet social needs has been alien to those who are used to thinking in terms of public spending for such purposes. The private sector too has traditionally felt that investments in this sphere lie within the purview of the public sector. I think that there is a great opportunity here — and not in terms of incentives for private businesses to devote a small portion of their profits to social ends. It is proper that this should be done on a voluntary basis. I am thinking rather of encouraging commercial investment that would yield profits, but that would also provide goods and services that could help address social problems. There must be further deliberations on this subject, and all parties must be ready to study it in a creative way. Chile has had successful experiences in the sphere of preventive social action.

Fifth, there is an obvious need to set up some kind of worldwide cooperation for the creation of more and better jobs. Job-creation must be at the heart of economic policy. The financial resources are there, but will and determination are lacking. Jobs must be at the centre of the economy if we want people to be at the centre of development. We must harmonize our macro-economic and our micro-social policies. We must be clear that nations cannot achieve economic stability while destabilizing the lives of their peoples.

Happily, we have progressed beyond the kinds of structural-adjustment policies followed in the 1980s, thanks in good measure to abundant criticism from many quarters, including from United Nations agencies and at

the World Summit itself. But we still need a world consensus that only the creation of more and better jobs will enable us to reach the Summit goals. Jobs have a crucial role to play in reducing poverty and in promoting social integration: those are two other major issues of the Summit.

Sixth, it is critical to halt the decline in international cooperation. We know of course that the richest countries are facing internal problems, both in their economies and with respect to public opinion, and that perhaps their assistance cannot be so generous or unconditional as it was in the past. It is true also that there have been mistakes, and that assistance has not always been properly used. But to my mind, that is not the point. The real point is that, given the structure of modern-day economic relations, we cannot hope that countries will achieve development solely on the basis of private investment.

In many cases, of course, this could be the path to follow, but certainly not in every case. To reduce international cooperation at a time when protectionism is on the rise, and to expect that this will ensure world stability, is absolutely impossible. Therefore, we urgently need to convince public opinion, Parliaments and the media in the countries of the North of the reality that international cooperation is a strategic element of world stability and not a question of willingness or unwillingness to provide funding or of need at the national level. This is a key component because it should be earmarked for specific needs that cannot otherwise be met.

As established in the Copenhagen Declaration of the World Summit for Social Development, there are real social problems in each country, but, it is not with policies of isolation that the countries of the North will find the stability they seek. Cooperation, however, is primarily a political issue. It is not merely a matter of adopting resolutions, but also of bringing together those actors that are prepared to take practical steps to achieve it.

Seventh, we urgently need to develop initiatives of solidarity among the countries of the third world. The Summit process was very decisive in this respect. I put a great deal of emphasis on recognizing the special situation of Africa and the need for us to adopt a specific commitment to Africa and to the less advanced countries. It was not easy to achieve agreement on this, because other developing countries in other geographical areas were concerned about the implications of differentiating or dividing the countries of the third world in this way. It seems to me, on the contrary, that we, among ourselves, should apply to the third world the same principles and values that we expect the developed world to apply to it. If we are not prepared to recognize the special difficulties of some of our developing countries and to support them accordingly, then we cannot really expect a similar stance from the developed countries vis-à-vis the developing world in general. I would suggest that the 30 most developed nations of the third world, however we define them, begin to develop initiatives of solidarity with other developing countries to implement the outcome of the World Summit on Social Development. Nothing would do more to reinforce the vision of change at the international level, and nothing would be more emblematic of the new way in which these issues could be dealt with than the third world's setting the example.

Finally, on the basis of the experience of the Summit and that of other world conferences, we can assess the impact on them by organizations of civil society, non-governmental organizations and others. This was especially true with regard to Copenhagen. However, the problem for organizations of civil society as a whole is that they are organized into sectors: organizations of women concerned primarily with women's issues, ecologists concerned with the environment, human rights organizations concerned with human rights, and so on. There are some cross-sectoral ties between these organizations, but, in spite of all their efforts, they tend to have partial information and rarely work together.

On the other hand, there are social actors that play what could be called a structural role in today's economy, but for the most part are not organized. We could speak of putting private enterprise at the service of social development, the great advantage of which is that both sides benefit. However, in the final analysis, a business is able to have earnings because there are consumers for its products. Investment is the key, as is accumulation. The ability of private investment to generate wealth is essential, as there can be no distribution without the creation of wealth. However, that process depends in turn on individuals to consume what is available in the market.

As a result, organizing all of us as consumers — like the union workers who organized themselves in the past to defend their interests — seems to be a central element. But here I am focusing primarily on the fact that all sectors of civil society continue working without coordination between them, and it would be a major objective to have some kind of forum of the sort we are thinking about in the General Assembly, to initiate a

large, global framework for civil society, to interconnect all these various sectors and to establish a high-level agenda on common issues on which to act together. The Social Summit issues — the eradication of poverty, full employment and social integration — are clearly part of that common agenda.

Finally, in terms of specific initiatives that could be carried out using the Summit as a launching pad, academic centres supported by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development could focus their research on the major obstacles to the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action.

In conclusion, those who constantly criticize may well say that these ideas are all well and good, but that in substance nothing will change and that things will remain as they are because the international community is not prepared to work with imagination for the future. That is what they are going to say. But I would like to recall that exactly the same things were said when, five years ago, the work began on organizing the World Summit for Social Development. The argument was that social development was not a world issue, that it would be very difficult to get the developed countries to make a commitment to this process, that this would be just one more conference that would end with the classic appeals from the South for a distribution of resources from the North — a litany of reasons as to why the Social Summit, first of all, would not take place and, secondly, if it did take place, it would be a failure. The truth is that there was a political framework for the Social Summit, and the results of the special session of the General Assembly under preparation also are going to depend on the commitment of all and on a clear identification of the political framework.

Let me conclude by saying that whenever I am faced with cynicism, I recall Oscar Wilde, who said that cynics know the price of everything but the value of nothing. Some might feel that I sometimes go to the opposite extreme and that I am too insistent. I am prepared to accept this, but the truth is that I believe deeply that our personal attitudes and our attitudes as States are very important. We can always emphasize difficulties and problems, but, contrariwise, we can always also focus on our own strength to confront those difficulties and seek to maximize our joint capacity to do it.

It was said that slavery would never disappear, that unions would never be established, that women would never vote, that the idea of human rights and the democratic process would never be reaffirmed in the world, that decolonization was impossible, that the Berlin Wall would stand for ever, that apartheid would never end. But these things did take place, and they took place because people did not allow themselves to become discouraged when faced with difficulties; on the contrary, they decided to act in unity and to maintain the integrity, the conviction and the values that make things happen.

This is the point we have reached with the World Summit for Social Development. The process led to a successful start, but we still have battles to fight. It is worth our while to participate in those battles and to plan well for them. There is no vision without organization. If vision is accompanied by organization and by the capacity to reach consensus, through a will to listen and to learn from others, then we can make progress. Fundamental differences, and respect for cultural diversity and various spiritual traditions, are key in social questions. Consequently, we must make progress in this sphere through a willingness and a commitment to listen to others.

If we have the power to change the world, then we must look within ourselves — at our conviction, desires and capacity to listen to and to work with others and to arrive at consensus. We must never believe that what appears impossible today cannot be achieved tomorrow. Everything that once was impossible is finally brought about by the persistence of human will.

**The Acting President:** In accordance with the decision taken by the General Assembly at its 32nd plenary meeting, held on 16 October 1997, I now call upon the Observer of the Holy See.

**Archbishop Martino** (Holy See): We now stand midway between the World Summit for Social Development and the special session of the General Assembly to be held in the year 2000 for the overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of that Summit.

At the Copenhagen Summit the family of nations came together at the level of Heads of State or Government to make solemn commitments concerning a new vision of development, which would have at its centre the human person. It was a moment of hope and expectation for many, including the wide range of representatives of civil society who worked constructively with the Governments to look at the challenges of poverty, of creating productive employment and of broad social integration.

We must not disappoint this hope and expectation. If we come to the review process with positive results, we will give a real boost to the confidence of our people in the United Nations system. If we come to the review process having made little progress, or even registering reduced consensus around our commitments, we will lend a new weapon to those who wish to sow scepticism about the ability of the United Nations to address the real issues of people.

Today, my delegation would like to address three specific themes which must be examined in the short period of time before the review session. The first theme is poverty. For many, the Social Summit was seen as the "poverty Summit", because at Copenhagen it was clearly recognized that it is possible to rapidly reduce and ultimately to eliminate, within a determinate period, the humiliating scourge of extreme poverty. The means to eliminate extreme poverty exist. Countries agreed to put in place clear strategies by the end of 1996. How can we celebrate the jubilee year 2000, how can we pass with honour into the new millennium, if we fail to report to the review session clear and sustained progress in the fight against extreme poverty?

I note in passing that today we are observing the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. I should like to quote the appeal made by Pope John Paul II for this occasion:

> "I renew my appeal that each person may commit himself, according to his own responsibilities, to eliminating the causes of poverty. May no one remain indifferent to those wounded by life! The Church, with great respect and affection, is alongside all those whom poverty deprives of their dignity, of their family life, of the opportunity to receive an education and to have a job. They are our brothers and sisters, whom Christ loves with particular preference. They await our concrete solidarity."

A second, more complex, theme which my delegation would like to address is the significance today of social and economic rights. The indivisibility of human rights, as well as their universal character, has been reaffirmed repeatedly by the international community over the past years. It is a principle which must be reaffirmed also in the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. But today there are also disquieting tendencies which reduce the significance of social and economic rights, considering them mere "aspirations", and taking away from them their specific character as "rights".

The full realization of these rights, it is clear, will only be accomplished gradually. But we must not allow the concept of "gradualism" to mean "indefinite postponement". In the complexity of modern societies and economies, Governments on their own will not be the sole actors in the realization of these rights. Their realization will require, among other aspects, the putting into place of policies which enable the market, the private sector and civil society, as well as public authorities on the local, regional and national level, to work constructively together. The complexity of the realization of these rights in society must not, however, reduce their significance as rights for each individual. When we speak of rights to nutrition, education, health, shelter, work, or development, we are really speaking of the specific moral goods of each individual, of the essential dimensions of his or her being a human person.

Being deprived of these rights, suffering the humiliating effects of such deprivation, can further lead to a situation in which the possibility of the person exercising other fundamental rights is, *de facto*, greatly curtailed. Where people are deprived of the possibility to fully enjoy the exercise of their social and economic rights, they so often enter into broader exclusion from full participation in society.

The third aspect which my delegation would like to address is that of the financial means available for development assistance, and especially the crisis of official development assistance. The significant growth of direct investment flows to the poorer countries has been one of the most indicative factors for development policy in recent years. The future of development will be very much linked with the ability of poor countries to attract such investment and to see that it brings social development for their own people.

But there is a great imbalance in these flows, which go principally to a handful of countries viewed as attractive. The poorest countries, if they are to attract investment, still require substantial official development assistance to remedy their comparative disadvantage. They will need well-targeted assistance to improve their basic infrastructures — not just physical infrastructures, but also human ones, through improved education and health care, and social ones, through investment in the structures of legality and governance.

Why are the funds currently available for official development assistance at an all-time low? It is true that in the past such funds have been badly utilized and have

not produced results. But spending, corruption and mismanagement marked the policies of donor and recipient countries. Indeed, it is more and more obvious today how much the self-interested policies of donor countries during the cold war and post-colonial periods have had long-term distorting effects on the development prospects of many countries, indeed of entire regions.

But, it must be admitted, the reduction of official development assistance is more than a question of the recognition of past errors or of donor fatigue. It is a question, in some cases, of a weakening of solidarity and a growth of dangerous isolationism. My delegation strongly rejects such tendencies. The question of international solidarity is not a mere policy issue: it is a question of the very nature of humanity, of the human community to which we all belong. If the process of globalization which is taking place in our world is to be truly human, it requires the construction of a truly global community, based on the common good of all humanity, in which there is a sense of common responsibility for all, especially for the weakest.

The Holy See would hope that one of the principal results of the process of the implementation of the Copenhagen World Summit and the preparation of the review conference in the year 2000 would be a renewed international consensus on the essential role of development assistance. It is certainly a question of identifying where and how such assistance can be best utilized. But it is above all a question of the recognition that investment in international solidarity — a sure contribution to a more equitable, and thus a more stable world — is something which is for the good of all.

**Programme of work**

**The President:** I should like to inform members of some changes in and additions to the programme of work of the General Assembly contained in document A/INF/52/3.

On Wednesday morning, 22 October, the General Assembly will, as the first item, hear an address by the President of the Republic of Mozambique. As the second item, the Assembly will take up agenda item 7, entitled "Notification by the Secretary-General under Article 12, paragraph 2, of the Charter of the United Nations". The third item to be considered is sub-item (b) of agenda item 16, on the "Election of seven members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination". The Assembly will then continue with the consideration of the items listed in the Programme of Work for Wednesday morning, with the exception of agenda item 34, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization", which will now be taken up on Thursday, 20 November, in the morning, and agenda item 40, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe", which will be taken up on Tuesday, 25 November, in the morning.

*The meeting rose at 1.45 p.m.*

United Nations A/52/PV.35

# General Assembly

Official Records

Fifty-second Session

35th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 22 October 1997, 10 a.m.
New York

*President*: Mr. Udovenko ..... (Ukraine)

*In the absence of the President, Mr. Tello (Mexico), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

*The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.*

**Address by Mr. Joaquim Alberto Chissano, President of the Republic of Mozambique**

**The Acting President** (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Assembly will first hear an address by the President of the Republic of Mozambique.

*Mr. Joaquim Alberto Chissano, President of the Republic of Mozambique, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The Acting President** (*interpretation from Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Republic of Mozambique, His Excellency Mr. Joaquim Alberto Chissano, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Chissano**: On behalf of the people and the Government of Mozambique, and indeed on my own behalf, it is a great honour for me to address this august Assembly. I bring to you the warm felicitations and best wishes of all Mozambicans.

Two years ago, during the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, we committed ourselves not only to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, but also to rededicate our efforts to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness for our universal Organization, with a view to enabling it to play a pivotal role in promoting sustainable development, particularly in the developing countries. Therefore, our deliberations in all subsequent General Assembly sessions should reflect that firm political will and commitment.

On that occasion, I informed the Assembly of the progress we had achieved in our continued endeavours to consolidate peace and democracy and promote socio-economic development. I am happy to state that, today, these positive trends are prevailing and that the situation in my country is improving. We envision the future with renewed optimism.

Our pluralist democracy continues to flourish; we are further strengthening our democratic institutions; and the state of the economy is gradually and steadily improving. However, many challenges lie ahead. We still have schools and hospitals to rehabilitate, and new ones to build. We still have roads to repair, and new ones to build. We still have landmines to clear. We have to address our heavy debt burden and find ways and means of bringing it to sustainable levels.

These challenges are indeed immense, but not insurmountable. With hard work and the generous support of the international community, I am sure we shall succeed in our quest for better living standards for our people. The United Nations and the international community at large have invested a lot in order to ensure

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a lasting peace and stability in Mozambique. I say to all the members of the international community: your effective work has helped put an end to the suffering of our people in a delicate and complex peace process. The cost of peace was high, but it would have been higher if you had failed to fulfil your obligations. We therefore urge you to recommit yourselves to providing all necessary means for the consolidation of the peace you have helped to achieve.

The advent of peace has made it possible for Mozambicans to rededicate themselves to the implementation of sound political and economic reforms, with visible positive results. It is our earnest desire to take maximum advantage of the rich potential of our natural resources and to use them in a sustainable and balanced manner with a view to creating wealth and a better future for our people.

As a result of the implementation of the structural adjustment programme, launched in 1987 under the most adverse conditions, encouraging developments are taking place in our economy. In 1996 the gross domestic product grew by around 6.4 per cent and exports increased by 24 per cent. The inflation rate declined sharply to 16.6 per cent from 70 per cent in 1994 and 54 per cent in 1995. The mid-year evaluation indicates 3.2 per cent, and we expect a single-digit cumulative rate for 1997. Moreover, we have also registered important progress in currency stabilization. We estimate that the 1997 figures for virtually all major economic indicators will be better than the previous ones.

Our successes in the consolidation of peace and democracy reflect the values our people have inherited throughout history; they reflect our common desire and noble aspirations to live together in unity and harmony within diversity, thanks to our growing culture of tolerance and forgiveness. They also constitute a vivid example of a culture of peace we have embraced in our country. We believe that the promotion and further consolidation of a culture of peace should be the next most important challenge to all societies as well as to each individual citizen.

It was within this framework that my Government, in close collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), convened at Maputo a conference on culture of peace and good governance. The outcome of this conference and of other similar conferences that have taken place worldwide was to recognize once again the existing relationship between peace, democracy and development, as well as the common challenges to all countries committed to implementing these values and processes. For these reasons, I welcome the efforts under way towards the adoption of a meaningful draft resolution on this contemporary issue.

Peace and stability cannot be ensured by the mere holding of multiparty elections, nor should they be seen as a simple absence of military conflict. Recent history proves that in conflict resolution a proper balance should be struck between the need for elections, with their inherent hostile and partisan propaganda, and the need for reconciliation that should follow the aftermath of a democratic process.

Our own experience reminds us that it is not enough to ensure reconciliation of former conflicting parties in order to guarantee a lasting peace. Our task today is to guarantee that a culture of peace is embedded in the minds of all citizens as an important step forward in conflict prevention and management. All citizens are called upon to participate, notwithstanding the diversity of opinions and sometimes of interests. Only commitment to supreme national interests can ensure that individual interests do not hamper these noble objectives.

Peace and democracy are fundamental tools for fostering development in all its aspects, especially in today's world, where one fifth of the world population is still confronted with absolute poverty, hunger and malnutrition, illiteracy and endemic disease. It is therefore incumbent upon all of us to take concerted actions in order to reverse this picture and to create an enabling environment for sustained development, with emphasis on education and the provision of basic health care, potable water and housing.

This requires the strengthening of the rule of law, good governance, transparency and accountability. It also requires security in all its components, including economic, social, environmental and all related issues. As we are about to cross the threshold of the new millennium, the concept of security must be considered in its global dimension. No country, no matter how big or how small, can develop in isolation. Indeed, environmental problems, refugees and displaced persons, transboundary movements of people and goods, drug trafficking, money laundering and other transnational crimes can only be addressed effectively through a cooperative approach in a global context.

Without peace and democracy, development will always be in jeopardy, and issues related to governance

and social instability will continue to confront future generations. That is why democracy and development, two faces of the same coin, remain a daunting challenge to our societies. This is an undertaking that requires a common approach from all Governments and from civil society, including the private sector.

These are equally the challenges facing the southern African region today. Because we believe that only collective efforts will bring about durable peace and stability and sustainable development, we attach great importance to regional cooperation within the framework of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). With 14 member States and about 170 million people, SADC is a viable economic bloc poised to play a positive role in the efforts for continental development.

The 1997 annual summit of Heads of State or Government of our Community reviewed the activities of the organization and developments that had taken place in the region since the last summit. Within the framework of the establishment of the African Economic Community, and as one of its building blocks, we are, *inter alia*, according top priority in our domestic agendas to issues pertaining to the social development of our countries so as to ensure that our policies and strategies are in response to, and in support of, national priorities. Special emphasis is being given to the need for investment in the development of technology and infrastructures.

The summit also considered the applications for membership of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of Seychelles, and decided to welcome those countries as the newest members of our Community.

The summit discussed in great detail the current situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We have agreed that the Democratic Republic of the Congo requires and deserves support from the international community in order to enable its newly established Government and its people to cope with the developmental challenges deriving from three decades of uncertainty.

A stable Democratic Republic of the Congo is equally vital for the attainment of the peace that has so far eluded the Great Lakes region and for the efforts under way with a view to finding a political settlement of the conflict ravaging the neighbouring Congo.

Furthermore, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has major strategic importance for the development of the region, and indeed, of the whole continent of Africa, given its great potential in such key areas as energy, water, tourism, transport and communications.

The issue of transport and communication is of paramount importance to southern Africa. The establishment of the Maputo, Beira and Nacala corridors are fundamental steps towards improving transport and communications within the region.

The concept of development corridors we are implementing in southern Africa represents a new partnership we are building in the region between Government, entrepreneurs and communities. A development corridor is not only a road or railway linking a harbour to one point at the border of a neighbouring country, but also, and more importantly, an area along the communications routes and beyond them into the interior of the countries concerned and open for investment in a great variety of economic activities, thus bringing about an integrated development of the region.

The areas of investment include improvements of sea ports and railways; improvement and construction of highways; and gas pipelines, energy and communications infrastructures, livestock, forestry, agriculture, mining, manufacturing, industry and tourism. We believe, therefore, that the development corridors will contribute significantly towards the realization of the noble goals and aspirations of the peoples of the region.

This is the path we have embarked on in southern Africa. We believe that, in so doing, we are making a positive contribution towards conflict prevention, resolution and management in Africa, and to building the blocks that shall sustain the development of our continent. In order to guarantee political stability as well as the sustainability of our development efforts, the region has established, within SADC, an Organ on Politics, Defence and Security with the responsibility of preventing, resolving and managing conflicts in the region.

This is the future that we envisage for the African continent: a continent in which the rule of law and legitimacy is above all other interests; a continent in which democracy, accountability and good governance must prevail; a continent in which development and social justice are promoted and safeguarded by all of us. This is where cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity must be further strengthened.

**The Acting President** (*interpretation from Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank His Excellency the President of the Republic of Mozambique for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Joaquim Alberto Chissano, President of the Republic of Mozambique, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

**Agenda item 7**

**Notification by the Secretary-General under Article 12, paragraph 2, of the Charter of the United Nations**

**Note by the Secretary-General (A/52/392)**

**The Acting President** (*interpretation from Spanish*): As members are aware, in accordance with the provisions of Article 12, paragraph 2, of the Charter of the United Nations and with the consent of the Security Council, the Secretary-General is mandated to notify the General Assembly of matters relative to the maintenance of international peace and security that are being dealt with by the Security Council and of matters with which the Council has ceased to deal.

In this connection, the General Assembly has before it a note by the Secretary-General issued as document A/52/392.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of that document?

*It was so decided.*

**Agenda item 16**

**Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections**

**(b) Election of seven members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination**

**Note by the Secretary-General (A/52/440)**

**The Acting President** (*interpretation from Spanish*): In accordance with General Assembly decision 42/450 of 17 December 1987, the Assembly elects the members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination upon their nomination by the Economic and Social Council.

The Assembly has before it document A/52/440, which contains the nominations by the Economic and Social Council to fill the vacancies in the Committee, which will occur as a result of the expiration on 31 December 1997 of the terms of office of the Bahamas, Benin, France, Ghana, Mexico, the Russian Federation and the United States of America. Those States are eligible for immediate re-election.

I should like to remind members that, after 1 January 1998, the following States will still be members of the Committee: Argentina, Austria, Brazil, Cameroon, China, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Germany, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Poland, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay and Zimbabwe.

Therefore, those 25 States are not eligible in this election.

The following States have been nominated by the Economic and Social Council: two African States for two vacancies — Uganda and Zambia; one Eastern European State for one vacancy — the Russian Federation; two Latin American and Caribbean States for two vacancies — the Bahamas and Mexico; two Western European and other States for two vacancies — the United States of America and France.

As stated in document A/52/440, the Economic and Social Council has postponed to a future session of the Council the nomination of two other members from the Western European and other States for a term beginning on the date of election and expiring on 31 December 1999.

The number of States nominated from among the African States, the Eastern European States, the Latin American and Caribbean States and the Western European and other States is equal to or does not exceed the number of seats to be filled in each of those regions.

In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, all elections shall be held by secret ballot. However, in accordance with paragraph 16 of decision 34/401, the Assembly may, in elections to subsidiary organs, dispense with secret balloting when the number of candidates corresponds to the number of seats to be filled.

May I therefore take it that the Assembly wishes to declare those States nominated by the Economic and Social Council from among the African States, the Eastern European States, the Latin American and Caribbean States and the Western European and other States — the Bahamas, France, Mexico, the Russian Federation, Uganda, the United States of America and Zambia — elected members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination for a three-year term beginning on 1 January 1998?

*It was so decided.*

**The Acting President** (*interpretation from Spanish*): I congratulate the States that have been elected members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination.

With regard to the two remaining vacancies to be filled from among the Western European and other States, the General Assembly will be in a position to act on them upon the nomination by the Economic and Social Council of two Member States from that region.

I therefore propose that the Assembly keep this sub-item on the agenda of the fifty-second session.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Assembly agrees to that procedure.

*It was so decided.*

**The Acting President** (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 16.

**Agenda item 25**

**Cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System**

**Report of the Secretary-General (A/52/376)**

**Draft resolution (A/52/L.6)**

**The Acting President**: I call on the representative of Peru to introduce draft resolution A/52/L.6.

**Mr. Guillén** (Peru) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I have the honour to introduce, under agenda item 25, the draft resolution entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System", which is sponsored by the 27 member States of the Latin American Economic System (SELA).

We are grateful for the report contained in document A/52/376, which the Secretary-General has submitted to the Member States of the United Nations in accordance with resolution 50/14, adopted by consensus at a previous session of the General Assembly.

The draft resolution introduced today has no financial implications, and its content is similar to those of the resolution adopted unanimously at the fiftieth session of the General Assembly.

I am pleased to report, however, that between the adoption of resolution 50/14 two years ago and the present draft, SELA has taken a series of decisions that are worth mentioning here, by way of complementing the report. The report refers to the work done by the system before the adoption of the resolution and, naturally, since it refers only to cooperation between SELA and specialized agencies of the system, it has not taken into account important decisions that have been reached, in particular at the recent meeting of the Latin American Council, held in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, from 6 to 9 October of this year, to which I shall refer momentarily.

From 1995 to the present SELA has accomplished a fundamental reorientation and adaptation in order to achieve two main objectives: first, to help the 27 members become integrated into the current international environment and, secondly, to coordinate their agendas for regional, hemispheric and international actions. This latter aspect is of particular importance because SELA is the only system that encompasses all the subregions of Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Council has therefore concentrated its endeavours on eight thematic areas, deemed priorities for development. These include analysing the process of globalization of the international economy, tracking the relations of the countries of the region with their principal economic partners and using computers to disseminate information.

All this is contained in a summary entitled "A current vision of SELA", which was prepared by SELA at the request of the Latin American and Caribbean Group. This is not a United Nations document, but it is available in English and Spanish and includes an index of

the recent studies conducted by SELA, which are also available on the Internet.

The meeting of the Latin American Council at Port-of-Spain was focused on the theme "growth and employment" because the member Governments were of the view that adjustment and restructuring policies were falling short of resolving the problems besetting the most disadvantaged sectors of the region's populations: youth and women. In that regard, at that meeting 10 specific points for action were laid out, and they are contained in the aforementioned summary.

The next meeting of the Latin American Council, in 1998, will focus on the theme "the dynamics of external relations of Latin America and the Caribbean" and will no doubt also take into account the results of the second Hemispheric Summit and the preparatory work for the biregional summit of Latin America and the European Union, to be held early in 1999.

All this means that the Latin American Economic System, with its relatively modest resources, is making available to the countries of the region the capacity to coordinate regional and subregional actions that coincide with the priorities laid down in the international agenda. All this is being done in coordination and cooperation with organizations such as those mentioned in the draft resolution we are introducing.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) regional project entitled "Support to SELA", a project of great importance to Latin America and the Caribbean, came to an end last year. We request that — to the extent possible, and in accordance with the decisions of the Executive Board, which are binding for UNDP, this cooperation will not be completely lacking.

The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean hope that — as part of the reorientation of international cooperation, which calls for efficiency and realistic goals — the work done by SELA will be given due consideration.

**Mr. Pino** (Venezuela) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: The delegation of Venezuela wishes to express its particular interest in co-sponsoring the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and Latin American Economic System (SELA), which was introduced by the delegation of Peru.

We are firmly convinced that SELA has been and will continue to be an effective and efficient instrument for consultation, coordination and cooperation among the nations of our Latin American and Caribbean region. In fact, SELA is making invaluable efforts in promoting the coordination of governmental policies in priority areas for our countries, such as economic integration, the active participation of our region in world trade, social development, technical cooperation, financing and investment, among others.

Consultation and coordination activities intended to harmonize common positions and strategies of the countries of our region in the economic field, offer the region ways to take more appropriate actions in order to become part of the demanding globalized economy now confronting us. In addition, SELA's analyses, activities and publications have enabled us to identify specific solutions to specific problems. In this context, the relationship of SELA, through formal coordination mechanisms, with United Nations bodies and other regional and extraregional organizations, such as the Andean Development Corporation, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Organization of American States and the Caribbean Community, to mention but a few, has enabled us to make more efficient use of the technical and financial resources available to the region.

Since its establishment in 1975, the Latin American Economic System (SELA) has maintained a productive, cooperative relationship with the United Nations. Over the years that relationship has been strengthened and diversified to the benefit of the countries of our region.

On this occasion we wish to appeal to the bodies and programmes of the United Nations system to continue to provide increasing support for the work carried out by the Latin American Economic System.

**Mr. Petrella** (Argentina) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: The delegation of Argentina would like to make a brief statement to express its support for the promotion of and the search for new cooperation mechanisms between the Latin American Economic System (SELA) and the United Nations. We welcome the Secretary-General's report, which describes in detail the progress made in the area of cooperation among United Nations organizations, agencies and programmes, with particular emphasis on the relationship between SELA and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

The adoption of free-market policies, the opening up of trade, decreased State intervention, and economic integration have effectively increased the efficiency of interregional mechanisms to revitalize trade, increase production, encourage investment and promote technological development. Likewise, the process of international trade liberalization has made clear the need to coordinate positions within the new international trade framework that emerged in the wake of the Uruguay Round.

The democratization process and changes in outside development strategies have been additional reasons for revitalizing integration and regional growth.

However, much remains to be done in terms of regional development. According to the conclusions of the First Regional Conference in Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development, held in São Paolo, Brazil, economic growth in the region has not been sufficient speedily to overcome social problems, given the low rate of savings and investment, a lack of dynamism in the job sector, marked social shortcomings and the existing gap between economic growth and the growth of the labour force.

This outlook reaffirms the need to revitalize mechanisms for coordination and cooperation. SELA is an important tool to assist in effectively integrating the Latin American region into the new realities of a broader market. Mechanisms for political and economic coordination in our region have developed in part thanks to existing cooperation mechanisms with the United Nations system, but it is clear that civil society has also played an important role in regional integration. The participation of new players has increased institutional involvement and given a new dynamism to the joint negotiating capacity of the countries within the system. Likewise, the involvement of non-State agents has encouraged our Governments to renew their efforts to support existing principles and mechanisms in order to achieve the objective of regional cooperation.

We must confront existing problems in a coordinated manner at the subregional, regional and international levels. While it is the responsibility of the countries of the region themselves to respond adequately to the new challenges posed by development, the advantages provided by close cooperation and collaboration between the region and the United Nations system will allow us to complement our regional approach with a universal one, and it will also give our countries alternative tools to help resolve the difficulties that have arisen on the path towards sustainable economic growth.

That is why the commitments to participate actively, to provide concrete support to the countries of the region and to strengthen international cooperation mechanisms such as the anticipated cooperation between SELA and the United Nations are complementary activities essential to the discharging of the mandate of SELA, which was established in Panama in 1975. Let us not forget to mention Venezuela, which has generously provided the headquarters for this body and has had a decisive influence on matters relating to cooperation and to the founding, transformative ideals of SELA.

On behalf of Argentina, I wish to express our strong support for the draft resolution submitted to the Assembly for its consideration. We believe that it accurately reflects the feeling in the region in terms of our future strategies for inter-institutional cooperation between the United Nations and SELA, and that it will respond to the challenges of both growth and modernization in Latin America.

**Mr. Mungra** (Suriname): I have the honour to address this meeting on behalf of the 14 member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) that are Members of the United Nations: Antigua and Barbuda, the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, the Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago and my own country, Suriname.

Allow me at the outset to extend our delegations' sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive and informative report (A/52/376), in which he informs us of the various cooperation activities that have been carried out between the Latin American Economic System (SELA) and the United Nations system, in particular with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the World Intellectual Property Organization.

Considering the increased cooperation we have witnessed during the past year in support of Latin American and Caribbean Member States in the field of

designing policies on social development — including the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development — on economic integration and on trends in the globalization process, our delegations are in favour of a further broadening and deepening of the mutual supporting activities between ECLAC and the Latin American Economic System, as expressed this morning by the representative of Peru.

During the general debate in the Second Committee, many delegations expressed their concern at the threat of the marginalization of many of the developing countries, in particular the small and vulnerable States, as a consequence of the globalization process. In this regard, the small, fragile and vulnerable economies of CARICOM member States should be given special attention by the United Nations system. Existing regional development institutions should be further strengthened in order to enhance their capacity to assist individual Member States to adapt successfully to the globalization process.

In its guidelines for action for the period 1997 to 2000, the Latin American Economic System has defined its role as an institution for promoting coordination and cooperation among its member States in pursuing the following main objectives: to secure the timely and adequate participation of the 27 member countries of Latin America and the Caribbean in the rapidly changing world economy; to contribute to strengthening the regional integration process, both among ourselves and with the outside world; and to enhance the global competitiveness of member States.

In this regard, the organization intends to give priority to promoting exchanges of experiences among member States, to the preparation by SELA of analytical and comparative studies and to follow-up work on key global economic issues with special attention to their regional and subregional aspects.

The goals and responsibilities of SELA as just mentioned are comprehensive, while on the other hand its resources are regrettably limited. We are therefore pleased that cooperation between those various United Nations organizations and SELA has allowed the institution to implement its mandate more fully. We expect that this assistance will be deepened and broadened in the near future.

This year, for the first time in 22 years, the Latin American Economic System held a Council meeting in a Caribbean State, Trinidad and Tobago, thus expressing the willingness of the organization to incorporate the interests of the Caribbean in a more assertive manner in the SELA work programme. CARICOM is pleased with this development, since it will forge greater cooperation and coordination among the developing countries in our region. Further strengthening of the collaboration between SELA and the United Nations system will undoubtedly enhance this process.

Against this background, I wish, on behalf of the States members of CARICOM, to commend draft resolution A/52/L.6, introduced this morning by the Permanent Representative of Peru, for unanimous adoption.

**Mr. Tanasescu** (Romania) (*interpretation from Spanish*): It is my honour to address the Assembly on agenda item 25, "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System". It may seem surprising that a country so distant from Latin America should be speaking on such a specific item, but there are rational reasons for this.

First of all, Romania is a Latin country. If we view Latin traits as a very important axis of cultural and spiritual diversity in the modern world, then we can see that this axis has two ends: one in Eastern Europe — in Romania — and the other is in the very South of Latin America. It is no mere happenstance that one of the first to explore Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego was the Romanian Iulio Popper, who visited those areas early in this century and carried out scientific studies of nature there.

Linguistic and cultural affinities between my country and the countries of Latin America are an essential element in the long-standing good relations between us. That is why we follow with interest economic and political developments in the region, along with the role played by the Latin American Economic System (SELA) in promoting such developments.

We welcome the report of the Secretary-General on the item before us and consider that it provides a good basis for discussion. The report affirms that there is convergence between the economic and social items of interest to the United Nations and those of interest to SELA, which is an ongoing positive element in the development of the relationship between the two organizations. I stress the importance of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in this cooperation with SELA, and a number

of recent joint projects on matters of interest not only to Latin America but also to other regions: the definition of economic and social policies, social aspects of regional integration and the role of human resources in the process of restructuring, to mention but a few.

Recent developments in Latin America have confirmed the growing importance of regional cooperation in current process of globalization. The Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR) in South America and the Central American Integration System (SICA) in Central America have in recent years strengthened their economic cooperation, showing that regional integration is a way for small and medium-sized countries to respond in a unified way to the challenges of globalization. Regional integration is a defining process of the world economy at the end of the twentieth century, and the countries involved see it as a tool for effective development as they strive for liberalization and for the opening up of their economies. Regional integration is a valid basis for promoting the integration of national economies in an increasingly interdependent and competitive economic world. As a framework for deliberation and cooperation among Latin American countries, SELA has been the starting point for regional integration.

In our view, all these concepts, on which economic efforts and action in Latin America are based, possess a value that has been confirmed by the appearance of similar processes in other regions. The United Nations remains the sole universal forum where we can share our experiences in these processes and exchange ideas and views on the specific needs of each region. We believe that this is one more argument in favour of periodic discussion of this item in the General Assembly. By analyzing items relating to regional cooperation and integration, we can identify the implications of these processes for the future structure of international relations and for the concepts that will define the world in the coming century.

In the 1980s, Latin American countries began a broad process of internal political democratization, economic restructuring and opening to the world. The results give rise to hope for developments on the international front. Without these processes, our debate on this item would be less rich.

At the beginning of the 1990s, following the fall of the Berlin Wall, similar processes began in Central and Eastern Europe, including in my country. Our region now includes more than 20 countries in various stages of the process of creating democratic institutions and legislation, along with market-economy institutions and mechanisms. There is great interest in formulating approaches to cooperation and regional integration.

Today I wish to make a proposal to our Latin American friends and to the representatives of SELA; it was suggested by a distinguished Argentine academic during the most recent meetings on the On-line Information Key (LINK) project, held under United Nations auspices in May. Here there is an opportunity to begin an exchange of experiences and opinions between the countries of Latin America and those of Central and Eastern Europe on issues that are relevant to the processes that both regions, at different times, have undertaken. The processes under way in both our regions could benefit from our sharing views on progress along the road to democratization, on institutions guaranteeing civil and economic freedom and on the opening up of our economies. With the support of ECLAC and of the Economic Commission for Europe, SELA could provide a framework for this exchange of experiences, and my country would participate in it with great interest.

**The Acting President** (*interpretation from Spanish*): In accordance with General Assembly resolution 35/3 of 13 October 1980, I now call on the Observer for the Latin American Economic System.

**Mr. Wagner** (Latin American Economic System) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I am pleased to express my thanks in particular to the delegation of Peru, which introduced the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System (SELA). I would also like to thank the delegations of the member States of SELA and that of Romania for having sponsored this draft resolution, as well as delegations that have spoken in favour of it. Of course, I have taken careful note of the initiative suggested by the delegate of Romania on the interesting project for exchanging experiences between Latin America and the Caribbean and the countries of Eastern and Central Europe. We will take the necessary coordinating steps to carry it out.

Since 1996 SELA has undergone a process of restructuring and modernization, which is reflected primarily in the reorientation of its work programme and the updating of its modalities for action. The exchange of experiences has been used as the principal mechanism for promoting regional coordination and cooperation.

In keeping with that reorientation, the activities of SELA are now focused on eight themes: an analysis of the expected impact of the process of globalization on the international economy and on the development of Latin America and the Caribbean; a follow-up to the relations among the countries of the region with their main economic and trade partners; a consideration of trade issues in their regional, hemispheric and multilateral dimensions; financing development; support for reconciling the various economic approaches to and agreements for integration in Latin America and the Caribbean; coordinating economic and social policies and strengthening small and medium-sized enterprises; technical cooperation among the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean within the framework of technical cooperation among developing countries; and activities related to information dissemination, so that the organization's work will reach the greatest number of actors within and outside the region.

These aspects are detailed further in the document entitled "A current vision of SELA", which, at the request of the Latin American and Caribbean Group, I am pleased to make available to delegations.

Cooperation between SELA and the United Nations system is of particular importance in this context, given the convergence and coordination of priorities set out at the regional level by the Latin American Council of SELA and those of the international agenda, in particular the agenda of the United Nations and the bodies within its system.

In this respect, I am pleased to affirm that we have continued to strengthen the ties of coordination and joint work of SELA with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the World Health Organization, the International Labour Organization and the World Intellectual Property Organization, to mention only the United Nations agencies with which we have the closest ties.

Of course, one of the characteristics of SELA is the joint and coordinated work it carries out with regional and international organizations so that we can avoid costly and needless duplications.

Particular mention should be made of the excellent cooperation that SELA has enjoyed over the years with the United Nations Development Programme Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries as a regional focal point for such technical cooperation among the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. Examples of this fruitful and close cooperation include the regional tasks of programming and negotiating technical cooperation among developing countries, such as that carried out in 1995 for Haiti, which enabled us to create more than 120 cooperation projects. Most of them to date have been carried out with excellent results, such as the project carried out in 1996 in support of small and medium-sized enterprises in Latin America and the Caribbean and the one initiated in 1997 in support of decentralization in Central America. A regional exercise for greater cooperation between the Caribbean and Latin America is scheduled for 1998, in Bridgetown, Barbados, and will bring together for the first time directors of international technical cooperation from the entire American and Caribbean region in a Caribbean country.

The Permanent Secretariat of the Latin American Economic System trusts that this cooperation will be strengthened and broadened in order to support the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean in our efforts to respond positively to the challenges of the globalization of the international economy and of achieving development with social equity.

**The Acting President** (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have now heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/52/L.6.

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to adopt the draft resolution contained in document A/52/L.6?

*Draft resolution A/52/L.6 was adopted* (resolution 52/3).

**The Acting President** (*interpretation from Spanish*): I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted. May I remind delegations that explanations of position are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

**Mr. Baltes** (Luxembourg): The European Union joined the consensus on draft resolution A/52/L.6, on cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System, but at the same time we would like to put on record the following observations.

Regarding operative paragraph 3, we note that the draft resolution urges the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to renew and expand its financial and technical cooperation with the relevant programmes. It is the European Union's understanding that decisions on such activities are up to the UNDP Executive Board in the context of UNDP's agreed priorities and budget.

Regarding operative paragraph 4, the European Union also notes that the resolution adds funds of the United Nations system to the list of bodies which are urged to continue and intensify their support for and cooperation in the activities of SELA. We would have liked some further clarification on the intention of this addition.

Also, the European Union would have welcomed the opportunity for informal consultations on the draft resolution before it came to the plenary.

**The Acting President** (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have heard the only speaker in explanation of position.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 25?

*It was so decided.*

**Agenda item 31**

**Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference**

**Report of the Secretary-General (A/52/377)**

**Draft resolution (A/52/L.2)**

**The Acting President** (*interpretation from Spanish*): I give the floor to the representative of Indonesia to introduce draft resolution A/52/L.2.

**Mr. Wibisono** (Indonesia): In its capacity as the Chairman of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, Indonesia has the distinct honour and privilege of introducing, on behalf of the 55 States members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), the draft resolution entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference", which is contained in document A/52/L.2 of 15 October 1997.

Before proceeding, however, we would like to express our deep appreciation to the Secretary-General for the comprehensive and informative report (A/52/377) he has presented under this agenda item on the state of cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Earlier this month, on the occasion of the annual coordination meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the OIC, held at United Nations Headquarters, Secretary-General Kofi Annan stated that the OIC and the United Nations were natural partners in the cause of peace and prosperity. On the same occasion, Mr. Ali Alatas, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia and Chairman of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, referred to the tremendous stake the OIC had in the revitalization of the United Nations through judicious reform and democratization, and stated that much of the advocacy and many of the initiatives that members of the OIC were pursuing would prosper or fade in the forums of the United Nations system.

Indeed, ever since its inception the Organization of the Islamic Conference has been steadfast in its commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. Over the years, we have witnessed expanded cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC with a view to achieving the common objectives of the preservation of peace and security and the promotion of social and economic development.

The draft resolution which I have the honour to introduce today not only reflects the many tangible forms of cooperation which have been established between the two Organizations, but is also aimed at further enhancing such cooperation. The draft is essentially identical to the resolutions adopted under the same agenda item at earlier sessions of the General Assembly.

The preamble of the draft resolution takes into account the desire of both Organizations to continue to cooperate closely in their common search for solutions to global problems. It recalls the Articles of the Charter of the United Nations that encourage the activities through regional cooperation for the promotion of the purposes and principles of the United Nations. It notes the strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations, its funds and programmes and specialized agencies and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, its subsidiary organs and its specialized and affiliated institutions. Also, it notes the encouraging progress made in the nine priority areas of cooperation, as well as in the

identification of other areas of cooperation. Furthermore, it recognizes that the strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations and other organizations of the United Nations system and the Organization of the Islamic Conference and other organs and institutions of the OIC system contributes to the promotion of the purposes and principles of the United Nations. It takes into account the report (A/47/277) of the Secretary-General entitled "An Agenda for Peace", in particular section VII, concerning cooperation with regional arrangements and organizations, and the "Supplement to An Agenda for Peace" (A/50/60). Finally, with respect to the preamble, it notes with appreciation the determination of both Organizations to strengthen further the existing cooperation by developing specific proposals in the designated priority areas of cooperation, as well as in the political field.

In its operative paragraphs, the General Assembly would, *inter alia*, note with satisfaction the active participation of the Organization of the Islamic Conference in the work of the United Nations towards the realization of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The General Assembly would also request the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference to continue cooperation in their common search for solutions to global problems. In addition, the General Assembly would welcome the efforts of the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference to strengthen cooperation between them in areas of common concern and to review the ways and means for enhancing the actual mechanisms of such cooperation. The Assembly would also welcome the efforts of the secretariats of the two Organizations to strengthen information exchange, coordination and cooperation between them in areas of mutual interest in the political field, and their ongoing consultations with a view to developing the modalities of such cooperation. It would further welcome the periodic high-level meetings between the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, as well as between senior secretariat officials of the two Organizations, and encourage their participation in important meetings of the two Organizations.

The draft resolution would recommend that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 50/17, in order to enhance cooperation and for the purpose of review and appraisal of progress, a general meeting between representatives of the Secretariats of the United Nations system and the Organization of the Islamic Conference should take place in 1998. It would also recommend that, again in accordance with General Assembly resolution 50/17, coordination meetings of focal points of the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system and the Organization of the Islamic Conference and its specialized institutions should be held concurrently with the general meeting in 1998. The draft resolution would encourage the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system to continue to expand their cooperation with the subsidiary organs and specialized and affiliated institutions of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, particularly by negotiating cooperation agreements, and would invite them to multiply the contacts and meetings of the focal points for cooperation in priority areas of interest to the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. It would urge the United Nations and other organizations of the United Nations system, especially the lead agencies, to provide increased technical and other forms of assistance to the Organization of the Islamic Conference and its subsidiary organs and specialized and affiliated institutions in order to enhance cooperation.

The General Assembly would express its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his continued efforts to strengthen cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and other organizations of the United Nations system and the OIC and its subsidiary organs and specialized and affiliated institutions to serve the mutual interests of the two Organizations in the political, economic, social and cultural fields; and would express the hope that the Secretary-General will continue to strengthen the mechanisms of coordination between the two Organizations.

The Assembly would request the Secretary-General to report to it at its fifty-third session on the state of cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. Finally, the Assembly would decide to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-third session the item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference".

On behalf of the member States of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, I should like to request the Members of the Assembly to support the draft resolution and, as has been the case in previous years, to facilitate its adoption by consensus.

**The Acting President** (*interpretation from Spanish*): In accordance with General Assembly resolution 3369 (XXX), of 10 October 1975, I now call on the observer for the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

**Mr. Ansay** (Organization of the Islamic Conference): It is my privilege to address the General Assembly this morning on behalf of the Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, Mr. Laraki, on agenda item 31, which covers the status of cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

I would take this opportunity, at the outset, to congratulate the President and his colleagues in the Bureau on their election to their high offices. I know that in the President's capable hands the work of the Assembly will be very ably directed. I also join other delegations in paying tribute to his predecessor, Mr. Razali Ismail, and his colleagues on the outgoing Bureau, for steering the work of the Assembly with remarkable success during its fifty-first session.

The report of the Secretary-General, which is before us in document A/52/377, provides informative material on the activities of cooperation between our two Organizations and their respective subsidiary and specialized organs, agencies and institutions in areas of common concern in 1997. It describes the endeavours of the United Nations system in implementing General Assembly resolution 51/18 of 14 November 1996, which requested the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference to continue cooperation in their common search for solutions to global problems relating to international peace and security, disarmament, self-determination, fundamental human rights, social and economic development and technical cooperation, as well as to continue to expand the parameters of this cooperation in response to the growing needs of our common member States. I would, therefore, take the opportunity to extend to the President and the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and to the Executive Heads of the various United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies, our sincere thanks for their and their respective staffs' efforts, which have kept our common endeavours in full motion throughout the year.

Representatives will recall that General Assembly resolution 50/17 of 20 November 1995 called for strengthening cooperation between our two Organizations in the political field, besides, of course, continuing to expand our ongoing cooperation in several economic, social and humanitarian sectors. As the Secretary-General's report illustrates, this aspect has figured prominently in the two meetings between the Secretaries-General of our two Organizations, held here at the United Nations on 2 May 1997 and 4 October 1997, and in the high-level meeting of officials of the two Organizations held here also on 4 October 1997. This meeting of senior officials preceded the meeting between the Secretaries-General of our two Organizations which I have just mentioned.

These meetings devoted particular attention to ongoing peacemaking efforts in Palestine, Afghanistan, Jammu and Kashmir and Tajikistan, as well as peacekeeping efforts relating to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Azerbaijan, Somalia and Cyprus. I would cite two examples of our cooperation at the practical level during the period under review: first, the workings of our respective missions in Afghanistan, which have maintained complementarity and close contact in assisting the various Afghan political factions in finding an agreeable solution to their present predicament; secondly, the joint support of the United Nations and the OIC extended to the inter-Tajik talks, which led to the signing of the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Concord in Tajikistan between the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and the United Tajik Opposition, in Moscow on 27 June 1997. On the same occasion, the Secretary-General of the OIC co-signed the Protocol on Guarantees along with the representatives of the United Nations, other observer States and organizations to support the efforts of the international community to ensure the implementation of the peace agreements.

I am glad to report that our cooperation in the social, economic and cultural spheres has proceeded as planned during the period under review. It is focusing on the nine priority areas that have been identified among our two Organizations, namely, the development of science and technology; trade and development; technical cooperation among Islamic countries; assistance to refugees; food security and agriculture; education and the eradication of illiteracy; investment mechanisms and joint ventures; human resource development; and the environment.

The adoption of new cost-effective modalities stemming from the recommendations of the meeting of United Nations and OIC focal points, held in Geneva in June 1995, which were endorsed by the general meeting between the secretariats of the two organizations, held in Geneva in June 1996, is accelerating the programme and project identification, approval and implementation processes. I would cite briefly two recent examples of these endeavours: first, the technical assistance that the OIC and the United Nations Development Programme are providing to the Foundation for Social Peace, a respected African non-governmental organization based in Niamey,

Niger, in implementing its Rural Education and Agricultural Extension facility for the nomads of the Sahel and Sahara regions, with some catalytic financial support from the Perez Guerrero Trust Fund; secondly, the technical assistance being extended by the Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the UNDP's Special Unit for Technical Cooperation Among Developing Countries to the small and medium-scale industries concerned with food processing and textiles in the Arab and African regions. In both instances, speedy project identification and approval processes reflecting effective coordination between the two Organizations at the working levels are now accelerating the delivery and implementation, to the advantage of the beneficiaries.

I should now like to refer briefly to the annual coordination meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the OIC, held on 2 October 1997, to discuss the agenda of the fifty-second session of the General Assembly, in particular those items that were of relevance to the member States of the OIC. I am happy to recall that the meeting was, unprecedentedly, addressed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations. As the Secretary-General's report mentions in paragraph 2, in response to our invitation, a senior representative from the United Nations Department of Political Affairs also attended the meeting and observed its deliberations. Paragraph 3 of the report of the Secretary-General summarizes the issues that the meeting covered.

The Ambassador of Indonesia, acting in his capacity as Chairman of the Islamic Group and the representative of the current Chairman of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, has graciously introduced, with detailed eloquence, the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference which is before the Assembly in document A/52/L.2 of 15 October 1997. I would take the liberty of drawing attention to 4 of the 13 operative paragraphs, because of their significance.

First, paragraphs 7 and 8 recommend the convening of a general meeting and of coordination meetings of focal points of the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system and of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and its specialized institutions in Geneva, concurrently, in 1998. We believe that the convening of the two meetings in the same time-frame, unlike the practice in previous years, will be an efficient and economical way of pursuing the objective of coordination between our two Organizations in areas of common interest.

Secondly, paragraph 9 encourages, among other things, the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system to negotiate cooperation agreements with their OIC counterparts for cooperation in priority areas of interest to the two Organizations. Two memoranda of understanding signed by the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) here in New York last year, and one with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) this year, have paved the way for ISESCO's systematic consultation and effective cooperation with these three major programmes of the United Nations, adding to several it has similarly concluded with other United Nations organizations in the past. We would hope that this process will continue to expand between the relevant organs, agencies and institutions of our two Organizations.

Thirdly, paragraph 10 urges the United Nations and other organizations of the United Nations system, especially the lead agencies, to provide increased technical and other forms of assistance to the OIC and its subsidiary and specialized organs and affiliated institutions, in order to enhance cooperation. At a time when the OIC is initiating a four-year action programme of economic and technical cooperation between its member States, it would welcome such assistance, which should go a long way in reinforcing and strengthening its institutional capacity for the operational challenges it will be facing in the process. This aspect was favourably approached in the discussions held between the Secretaries-General of the two Organizations when they last met here earlier this month.

As with the resolution of the preceding year, none of the operative paragraphs contained in this resolution involves any additional financial implications. I am therefore confident that it will attract unanimous approval.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that the OIC derives its inspiration and guidance from the teachings of Islam, the religion of peace, which advocates justice, equality, tolerance and cooperation between all nations and all segments of mankind. These noble tenets shall continue to guide our cooperation with the United Nations as we pursue our journey towards the global village of the twenty-first century, in quest of peace, prosperity and progress for all mankind.

**The Acting President** (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker on this item. The General Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/52/L.2.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft resolution?

*Draft resolution A/52/L.2 was adopted (resolution 52/4).*

**The Acting President** (*interpretation from Spanish*): May I also take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 31?

*It was so decided.*

**Agenda item 33**

**Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States**

**Report of the Secretary-General (A/52/378)**

**Draft resolution (A/52/L.3 and Corr.1)**

**The Acting President** (*interpretation from Spanish*): I give the floor to the representative of Yemen to introduce the draft resolution.

**Mr. Al-Ashtal** (Yemen) (*interpretation from Arabic*): In my capacity as Chairman of the Arab Group for this month, I have the honour to introduce, on behalf of the member States of the League of Arab States, the draft resolution contained in document A/52/L.3, under agenda item 33, "Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States".

The existing bonds between the United Nations and the League of Arab States were reinforced following the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 48/21 on "Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States". That resolution, adopted by consensus, embodies the cooperation sought under Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter between the United Nations and regional organizations.

As demonstrated by their common history, the relationship between the two Organizations has been premised on the principles and purposes enshrined in their respective charters. These charters aim at the same objective, namely, maintenance of international peace and security being in the forefront of their interests.

In view of the fact that the peace process in the Middle East is currently stalling because of genuine difficulties and obstacles that may jeopardize peace and security in the region, there is a dire need for further cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States, in order to contribute to the creation of a more favourable atmosphere in which the peace process in the Middle East will lead to a comprehensive, lasting and just peace ensuring the legitimate rights of all parties concerned, so that the Palestinian people can exercise all its legitimate rights on the totality of its national territory, including Jerusalem.

In the same context, there is a pressing need to intensify cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States in economic, social and development areas so that the economic and financial resources available may be used in a more coordinated and efficient manner in pursuit of the common interests of the two organizations.

The preambular portion of the draft resolution before us contains paragraphs that underscore the desire of the two organizations to consolidate the ties existing between them in all spheres, and to continue their cooperation, thereby promoting the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

In the operative paragraphs of the draft resolution, the Assembly, *inter alia*, expresses appreciation to the Secretary-General for the follow-up action he has taken to implement the proposals adopted at the meetings between the representatives of the secretariats of the United Nations and other organizations of the United Nations system dealing with development and the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States and its specialized organizations, including the latest meeting held in Geneva in 1997.

Paragraph 11 calls for a general meeting to take place every two years between the United Nations system and the League of Arab States. It also calls for inter-agency sectoral meetings to be organized regularly on areas of priority and wide importance in the development of the Arab States, on the basis of agreement between the counterpart programmes of the United Nations system and the League of Arab States and its specialized organizations.

On behalf of the Group of Arab States, I invite all members of the international community to support the League of Arab States and its efforts to cooperate with the United Nations system in the service of their common goals, as set forth in the text of the draft resolution now before the Assembly. This draft resolution merits adoption by consensus.

**The Acting President** (*interpretation from Spanish*): In accordance with General Assembly resolution 477 (V) of 1 November 1950, I now call on the Observer of the League of Arab States.

**Mr. Hassouna** (League of Arab States): Allow me at the outset to express to the President my sincere congratulations on his election to preside over the United Nations General Assembly at its fifty-second session. His election to that lofty post attests to the confidence and high esteem that the international community feels for his country, Ukraine.

Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States is nothing new. It began in the 1940s, when the founding States of the League of Arab States participated in drawing up the United Nations Charter at the San Francisco Conference, thereby contributing to enshrining in the Charter the principle of regional organizations. That principle led to the creation on 22 March 1945 of the League of Arab States, the first regional organization to emerge in the international order following the end of the Second World War.

Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States has evolved gradually over time. Its first stage began in 1950, when the United Nations Secretary-General, at the request of the General Assembly, invited the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States to attend the session of the Assembly as an observer, and continued until 1981, when the General Assembly invited the League of Arab States to participate officially as an Observer in the sessions and work of the Assembly and its subsidiary bodies.

The first contractual relationship between the two organizations, in the sphere of cooperation, was set forth in a memorandum of agreement that was ratified by both organizations in 1960. Subsequently, the two organizations determined to strengthen their cooperation, in keeping with an agreement between the two organizations that was ratified in 1989.

Over the years, cooperation between the two organizations has evolved and now includes several agreements between the League of Arab States and the United Nations and its specialized agencies, establishing cooperation in joint programmes and projects in the interests of the Arab region.

In his report (A/52/378) of 23 September 1997, the Secretary-General indicates that the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the League of Arab States have in recent times continued their practice of meetings and consultations. The Secretary-General of the League of Arab States held important consultations at United Nations Headquarters with Mr. Kofi Annan on two occasions, in June and October of this year. The Secretaries-General discussed the various questions before the United Nations of concern to Arab countries and considered ways to strengthen coordination and cooperation between the two organizations. We hope soon to welcome the United Nations Secretary-General at the Headquarters of the League of Arab States in Cairo to continue the discussion of the various questions of interest to both organizations.

Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States was broadened during the course of a successful joint meeting between the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the League of Arab States and its institutions at Geneva in July 1997, as a follow-up to earlier joint meetings between the two organizations held at Geneva in 1993 and Vienna in 1995.

The agenda of that meeting attests to the interest of both organizations in such international and regional questions as the political question of the maintenance of international peace and security or humanitarian questions such as mine clearance, as well as other questions dealing with economic and social cooperation, sustainable development, the environment, combating drugs, crime prevention, agricultural and rural development, family planning, population and health. All those subjects are both regional and international in scope and are dealt with by the United Nations and the League of Arab States in the framework of the active cooperation that they enjoy.

The positive nature of this cooperation is best reflected in the conclusions reached by the participants in that meeting as a result of their evaluation of the achievements realized to date, which demonstrate the need to pursue the cooperation between the two

organizations to foster international peace and security and strengthen social and economic development in the region.

In this respect, I wish to share the view of the participants on the importance of pursuing the joint political efforts of the two organizations in the settlement of regional disputes and crises. I would add here that these efforts should be based on what is currently being done to settle the crisis in Somalia, given that the two organizations are participating in Somalia's national reconciliation process with a view to restoring security to that country. The participants also felt that it is necessary to continue studying the question of strengthening the role of the League of Arab States and its ability to contribute to the areas of preventive diplomacy and peacekeeping in accordance with Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter.

In the area of disarmament, the participants supported the efforts of the League of Arab States in drafting an agreement to make the Middle East a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction and encouraged the two organizations to step up their efforts to proclaim it so. They also emphasized the need to make the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) universal through the accession of all countries. In this respect, the participants noted the accession of all Arab States to the Treaty.

In addition, they expressed their concern over the continuing problem of landmines, which cause great human suffering. We should therefore intensify international efforts to solve this problem. There is no doubt that the recent Oslo agreement to ban anti-personnel landmines represents an important step towards this goal.

One of the major results of the Geneva meeting was the joint agreement of the two organizations on holding a sectoral meeting on international trade and development at the headquarters of the League of Arab States in Cairo in 1998. This is a priority area for achieving progress and for economic and social development in the Arab region. In this respect, I should like, on behalf of the League of Arab States, to thank the Secretariat of the United Nations for its tireless efforts to convene joint meetings between the two organizations and to strengthen cooperation between them in all areas.

The current international order is seeing major changes in regional and international relations. This highlights the increased importance of the United Nations and its crucial role in maintaining international peace and security. Aware of this reality, the Secretary-General of the United Nations has set forth his reform programme for the Organization, which includes a set of measures and proposals aimed at achieving this goal. The League of Arab States expresses its support for the Secretary-General and its appreciation for his initiative, which is aimed at improving the Organization's performance and strengthening its role.

I would also stress the content of the Secretary-General's report on the programme of reform, which affirms the will of the United Nations to increase cooperation with regional organizations so as to make them ever more active partners with the Organization in all activities related to peacekeeping and international security, including conflict prevention. The League of Arab States stands ready to cooperate with the United Nations in this context, particularly in the light of the League's recent efforts to improve its mechanisms and to create new political and legal bodies for settling regional conflicts, such as the Arab court of justice and its own mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution.

In the context of its attachment to the establishment of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in our region, and on the basis of the principles of the United Nations Charter and international resolutions, the Council of Foreign Ministers of the League of Arab States, at its 108th regular meeting in September, reiterated the commitment of League members to the two essential principles relating to their position on recent developments in the peace process.

First, we attach importance to the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace as a strategic goal on the basis of the principles of the peace process — the most important of which is the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978) — as well as the principle of land for peace and the implementation of the legitimate political rights of the Palestinian people, including its rights to self-determination and the establishment of an independent State.

Secondly, we reject the policies of the Israeli Government aimed at undermining the peace process and its repudiation of the principles and bases of that process. We also reject its refusal to implement the commitments and agreements undertaken in the course of the peace process; its unilateral measures aimed at imposing a *fait accompli* in Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Golan; and

its aggressions in southern Lebanon. We hold the Israeli Government fully responsible for the consequences of its policies and positions, which have set back the peace process and thrown into question the measures taken in respect of Israel in the framework of the peace process.

Given the dangers facing our region and the escalation resulting from the continuing policies and practices of the Israeli Government, the League of Arab States asks the international community, represented by the United Nations, to assume its responsibilities and role in relaunching the peace process, following all negotiating options and implementing the Organization's resolutions of international legality on the question of Palestine and the Middle East, which is a legal, political and moral obligation. In our view, this is the only guarantee of peace and security for the peoples of the region.

In conclusion, I would affirm the continued and unequivocal support of the League of Arab States for the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and wish the Organization every success in its tasks. May it meet the challenges it faces in our world today, where our two organizations are striving to establish respect for the values, principles and laws governing actions between countries and peoples.

**The Acting President** (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/52/L.3 and Corr.1. May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft resolution?

*Draft resolution A/52/L.3 and Corr.1 was adopted* (resolution 52/5).

**The Acting President** (*interpretation from Spanish*): I now call on the representative of Israel, who wishes to explain his position on the resolution just adopted. May I remind him that explanations of vote or position are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

**Mr. Gilon** (Israel): The delegation of Israel has joined the consensus on this resolution for the fourth time in a row. In so doing, we are guided by the desire to make peace with our neighbours, all of which are members of the League of Arab States.

Today, after a long period of standstill in the peace process, there is new hope for progress on the Israeli-Palestinian track. The nine joint committees have resumed their work after a meeting between Prime Minister Netanyahu and Chairman Arafat and between Foreign Minister Levy and Mr. Abu Mazin. Further discussions are expected later this month in Washington.

We still hope for positive developments on the Syrian-Lebanese track. It is regrettable that at the meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Arab League held in Cairo, a one-sided approach was adopted, and only Israel was blamed for the problems which have at times arisen in the peace process. The Arab League Foreign Ministers called for, *inter alia*, stopping the normalization process between Israel and its Arab neighbours, abjuring Arab participation on multilateral tracks, adhering to the Arab boycott against Israel and more.

The peace process which began in Madrid in 1991 was based on two tracks: the bilateral tracks between Israel and its neighbours, and multilateral tracks between Israel and the entire Arab world. Freezing one track of the peace process contributes nothing to the advancement of the other track.

Despite our concerns, we also note that the Ministers for Foreign Affairs have at the same time emphasized their commitment to peace. We hope that now, when there are new prospects for the peace process, they will stand by their commitments and choose a constructive role in advancing peace in our region.

Israel supports cooperation between the United Nations and various regional organizations, including the League of Arab States. Moreover, Israel does not seek to replace the current regional system of States with a new organizational structure in the Middle East. Indeed, the cooperation between the League of Arab States and the United Nations is based on provisions of the United Nations Charter. In this context, it is regrettable that Israel still does not belong to a regional political group — which its geographical location would warrant — at the United Nations due to the political objections of some Member States.

Israel calls upon the members of the League of Arab States to lift their objection to the admission of Israel to the Asian Group. The fact that Israel is currently denied membership in any regional political group directly contradicts the basic principle of the universality of the United Nations, as well as the principle of sovereign equality.

Israel takes this opportunity to call for increased cooperation between the United Nations Development Programme and the League of Arab States for the establishment of joint projects within the framework of regional agricultural development in the areas under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Council.

Israel feels that the Arab world should provide a greater share of aid to the Palestinian Council to match the aid given by the European Union, Norway, Japan and the United States.

Israel welcomes all efforts to advance the social, economic, education, health and cultural standing of Palestinian residents of the territories, within the framework of participation between the League of Arab States and United Nations agencies.

This is the first resolution on an issue related to the Middle East to be adopted by the General Assembly at its fifty-second session. We are pleased that the resolution was adopted by consensus. We would therefore take this opportunity to recommend that all parties to the peace process exercise restraint in both the language of draft resolutions to be submitted, as well as with regard to their stated purposes.

We cannot build confidence in the Middle East by engaging in political battle in New York. The peace process is by its nature bilateral, between the parties. Inflammatory rhetoric offered in international forums surely belongs to another era.

**The Acting President** (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have heard the only speaker in explanation of position.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 33?

*It was so decided.*

**Agenda item 158**

**Observer status for the Andean Community in the General Assembly**

**Draft resolution (A/52/L.5)**

**The Acting President** (*interpretation from Spanish*): I call on the representative of Ecuador to introduce draft resolution A/52/L.5.

**Mr. Camacho** (Ecuador) (*interpretation from Spanish*): On behalf of the sponsors, I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/52/L.5, entitled "Observer status for the Andean Community in the General Assembly".

The member countries of the Andean Community share particularly close social, cultural and historical ties. They became independent through a common effort headed by Simón Bolívar.

Following a century and a half of independence, the plenipotentiaries of Bolivia, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador and Peru signed the Subregional Integration Agreement on 26 May 1969, Cartagena de Indias, Colombia. Venezuela signed the Agreement in 1973, and in 1976 Chile withdrew from it, leaving the five States that today make up the Andean Community.

The process of integration continued to develop: in October 1992 the Andean Free Trade Area was established; in 1995 the Andean Customs Union was established when the Common External Tariff came into force. Finally, at the seventh Andean Presidential Council, held at Quito, Ecuador, on 5 September 1995, the five countries decided to reorganize the executive and administrative bodies of the system to create the Andean Integration System — the Andean Community we know today.

As a result of that reorganization, the six principal bodies of the Andean Integration System were set up: the Andean Presidential Council, the highest body of the System, which is composed of the Heads of State of the member countries and which meets annually; the Andean Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs; the Commission of the Andean Community; the General Secretariat, as the permanent executive body, with its headquarters in Lima, Peru, and headed by the Secretary-General; the Andean Community Court of Justice, with its headquarters in Quito, Ecuador; and the Andean Parliament, whose headquarters will be in Bogotá, Colombia.

The main objectives of the Andean Community are to promote the balanced and harmonious development of the member countries on an equal basis through integration and economic and social cooperation; to accelerate economic and social growth and generate employment; to reduce vulnerability to external factors and to improve the position of member countries in the global economic context; and to strengthen subregional

solidarity and reduce differences in existing levels of development among its members.

On behalf of the member States of the Andean Community, I would like to express our gratitude to the members of other systems of integration, such as the European Union, the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR), the Central American Integration System and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), all of which generously offered to sponsor the draft resolution that I am introducing to the Assembly. We are also grateful for the sponsorship of the United States of America.

The Andean Community attaches great importance to its relations with other integration systems. These past few days, the President of Ecuador, Dr. Fabián Alarcón, the current Chairman of the Andean Presidential Council, accompanied by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the countries of the Community, has been visiting Brussels in order to strengthen ties between the European Union and the Andean Community.

Similarly, the Andean Community is involved in negotiations with MERCOSUR with the aim of establishing a free-trade zone between the two groups within 10 years. To the same end, negotiations are also under way with Panama and CARICOM, and discussions are foreseen with the Central American Integration System in the future.

Before concluding, I wish to point out that Canada, Cyprus, France and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia have joined the 35 sponsors which appear in document A/52/L.5. We hope that the General Assembly will welcome this draft resolution and give it its unanimous support.

**Mr. Escovar-Salom** (Venezuela) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The delegation of Venezuela is very pleased to join in sponsoring this draft resolution aimed at granting observer status to the Andean Community in the General Assembly.

The Andean Community has enabled its member countries — Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela — to promote balanced harmonious and equitable development through economic and social integration.

For example, we have established a free-trade area, without tariff or para-tariff restrictions, and we are negotiating with the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) to extend that zone over the next 10 years. Similarly, we have signed new cooperation agreements with the European Union in order to promote the flow of investment and the transfer of technology.

This dynamism imparted by the Andean Community to our economies has enabled us to create sources of stable and productive employment and to fight effectively against poverty, marginalization and the other forms of suffering that still affect a considerable portion of our population.

The purpose of the Andean Community is to improve the standard of living of the inhabitants of the subregion. Observer status at the United Nations would facilitate the realization of this mission. Venezuela is open to relations with the rest of the world. We view globalization as a fundamental trend of the times and of the coming century. But to achieve globalization many roads will have to be crossed, and there are many means of crossing them. Therefore, Venezuela welcomes integration efforts with other countries. The Andean Community is one such means, and that is why we would welcome its presence as an observer at the United Nations.

**The Acting President** (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/52/L.5.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft resolution contained in document A/52/L.5?

*Draft resolution A/52/L.5 was adopted* (resolution 52/6).

**The Acting President** (*interpretation from Spanish*): May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 158?

*It was so decided.*

**Programme of work**

**The Acting President** (*interpretation from Spanish*): I should like to inform delegates that agenda item 42, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity", originally scheduled for this morning, will be taken up at a later date to be announced. I should also like to inform members that the

programme of work for the remainder of October, for the month of November and for the beginning of December has been issued as document A/INF/52/3/Add.1 this morning. The list of speakers for each of the items listed in that document is now open.

The General Assembly will be kept informed, in due course, of the dates for the consideration of other agenda items as well as of any additions or changes.

*The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.*

United Nations A/52/PV.36

General Assembly
Fifty-second Session

*Official Records*

36th plenary meeting
Monday, 27 October 1997, 10 a.m.
New York

*President*: Mr. Udovenko ..... (Ukraine)

*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

**Agenda item 13**

**Report of the International Court of Justice (A/52/4)**

**The President:** This morning the Assembly will first turn to the report of the International Court of Justice covering the period from 1 August 1996 to 31 July 1997.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the report of the International Court of Justice?

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** I call on Mr. Stephen Schwebel, President of the International Court of Justice.

**Mr. Schwebel** (President of the International Court of Justice): It is an honour for me to address the General Assembly on the occasion of its consideration of the annual report of the International Court of Justice for the period August 1996 to August 1997. Speaking to the General Assembly on the Court's report is a tradition which was initiated by Sir Robert Jennings during his presidency of the Court, and it is one that I am happy to maintain, as did my immediate predecessor as President, Judge Bedjaoui.

It is a particular pleasure to speak to a General Assembly that meets under the presidency of Foreign Minister Udovenko. He is a leader of a State which recently has taken an important step in support of the Court's jurisdiction.

This is the year in which the Organization welcomed Mr. Kofi Annan as its new Secretary-General. Among the highlights of the year for the Court was the visit to The Hague by the Secretary-General in March, shortly after he took office. Members of the Court took great pleasure in Mr. Annan's visit and in having the opportunity to discuss with him, in depth, matters of current concern to the Court and to the United Nations. It was in a very real sense a working visit. The Court appreciated the profound interest in its work which that visit represented and the impetus it gave to it.

The Secretary-General, in visiting The Hague, visited what is increasingly seen as the judicial capital of the world. The Court is appreciative of the facilities of The Hague and the courtesies of the host Government. It is appreciative of the support of the host Government and the United Nations in extending the Peace Palace to accommodate the many Judges ad hoc and the staff of the Registry, extensions which have been notably successful. It looks forward to the celebrations of the centenary of the Hague Peace Conference of 1899 and it follows with high interest the negotiations in respect of the establishment of an international criminal court.

In the period under review, the Court gave a Judgment on 12 December 1996 upholding its jurisdiction in the case concerning *Oil Platforms* brought by the Islamic Republic of Iran against the United States of America. It then turned its attention to the case concerning the *Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros Project*, brought by Special Agreement between Hungary and Slovakia. It

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concerned a project for the joint construction of dams on the Danube River — and very much more. Quite apart from the exceptional amount of public interest this case aroused in those countries, and the variety of difficult and challenging issues it raised — fundamental issues of the law of treaties, environmental law, the law of international watercourses and of State succession and State responsibility — the case presented a number of distinctive features which called upon the Court's resourcefulness.

The volume of pleadings and documentary annexes filed exceeded 5,000 pages. There have been other cases of like or larger dimension of pleadings — such as *South West Africa*, *Barcelona Traction*, some *Continental Shelf* cases, and *Military and Paramilitary Activities in and against Nicaragua* — but the majority of cases produce pleadings less massive. The *Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros* pleadings and annexes placed a considerable burden on the Court's tiny translation services and on its budget.

The case also gave the Court the unique opportunity, between two rounds of oral hearings, at the joint invitation of the Parties,

> "to exercise its functions with regard to the obtaining of evidence at a place or locality to which the case relates". [A/52/4, para. 108]

This procedure is poetically known in French as a *descente sur les lieux*; in English, we have come to call it a "site visit". The Parties agreed on the detailed itinerary, content and logistical arrangements of the visit, and the full Court spent four days visiting locations along the Danube between Bratislava and Budapest, accompanied by representatives of the two States and their scientific advisers. The Court looked, listened, asked many questions and gained a new dimension of insight into the case and what it meant to the Parties — much more than could have been gleaned from confining the proceedings to The Hague. I might add that it was all organized by the Parties with admirable efficiency.

I use the word "unique" because it was the first time in the history of the present Court that such a working visit to a site of the dispute had been undertaken. The visit was not entirely unprecedented. Almost 60 years ago, in May 1937, the Permanent Court of International Justice spent two days visiting a number of locations rather closer to the seat of the Court, along the River Meuse between Maastricht and Antwerp, in connection with a dispute between the Netherlands and Belgium in the case concerning the *Diversion of Water from the Meuse*. The published record of that visit is terse, but even so, the parallels between the two exercises — as between the cases themselves and the character of the visits — turned out to be striking.

There have been other occasions when such visits were requested by one party or canvassed, but for various reasons were not carried out by the Court. Clearly, the issues of law can usually be decided without such an exercise. In the exceptional case in which a site visit would be useful, it would depend upon a high degree of cooperation between the States concerned, and one can imagine only some contentious cases in which the situation on the ground may lend itself to carrying out a site visit. There are also financial implications for the States concerned. However, the successful completion of this valuable procedure in the *Gabčíkovo* case is suggestive.

The Court gave its Judgment in the *Gabčíkovo* case on 24 September. The importance of that Judgment not only for Hungary and Slovakia, but for the interpretation, application and development of international law, is considerable. It is a Judgment of significance for the law of treaties, of State responsibility, of international watercourses, of the environment and of State succession.

The *Gabčíkovo* Judgment is notable, moreover, because of the breadth and depth of the importance given in it to the work product of the International Law Commission. The Court's Judgment not only draws on treaties concluded pursuant to the Commission's proceedings — those on the law of treaties, of State succession in respect of treaties, and the law of international watercourses; it also gives great weight to some of the Commission's draft articles on State responsibility, as did both Hungary and Slovakia in their pleadings. This is not wholly exceptional; rather it illustrates the fact that, just as the judgments and opinions of the Court have influenced the work of the International Law Commission, so the work of the Commission may influence that of the Court.

The *Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros* Judgment is noteworthy too because it is the first of the Court to be placed on the Court's own Internet website, and that on the day of delivery of the Judgment. There was great use made of this innovation and we are confident that there will be of our website generally.

A last reason why the *Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros* case is of particular interest is that it is, in a sense, ongoing,

even after that Judgment. This is because of the nature of the parties' agreement as to what the role of the Court was to be. Essentially, in their Special Agreement, they handed over to the Court for resolution the legal aspects of a dispute which had deeply divided them at the political level, and which had proved intractable. The questions put by the parties, precisely framed, were clearly and conclusively answered by the Court in accordance with international law. But that is not where it ends; the Special Agreement goes on to provide that the parties shall

> "Immediately after the transmission of the Judgment ... enter into negotiations on the modalities for its execution."

It further provides that

> "If they are unable to reach agreement within six months, either party may request the Court to render an additional Judgment to determine the modalities for executing its Judgment."

So, in a very real sense, the function of the Court in this case has been to provide the parties with the legal answers within which they may pursue their further negotiations: in other words, to advance the progress of their mutual search for a solution by assuming responsibility for defining the fundamental legal parameters of that process. It is for them to apply the Court's Judgment in taking their negotiations to a new level. In so doing, they will be directed not only by the Court's Judgment about the law of the matter, about the legal rights and wrongs of the past. They will also be guided by the Court's views as to the practical content of future cooperative arrangements.

This recalls to mind the concept evoked by Sir Robert Jennings when he addressed the Assembly in October 1993, charting the tendency, already apparent then, for the Court to be seen not solely as a sort of judicial "last resort", though it is that, but also as "a partner in preventive diplomacy", a vital part of the machinery deployed by States in the course of dispute resolution, machinery by which judicial findings of fact and rulings of law may define the bounds of constructive negotiations. The Court is gratified by the continuing development of this role, as part of the fabric of diplomatic negotiation with which the members of the community of nations interact to further the principles of the Charter and of international law.

This is why it is important to take account, in any assessment of the Court's work, not only of the cases which have been the subject of Judgments of the Court, and not only of disputes which are settled because of the prospect of resort to the Court, but also of those cases which, at a certain stage of the proceedings, have become ripe for and resulted in negotiated settlements.

There have been some telling examples in the past few years. Sir Robert mentioned two. One was the case on *Certain Phosphate Lands* between Nauru and Australia, which was settled after a Judgment on jurisdiction and admissibility favourable to Nauru. The other was the *Great Belt* case between Finland and Denmark, which was, after issuance of an order on a request for the indication of provisional measures, settled very shortly before the expedited hearings on the merits were to start, by negotiations which the Court had encouraged. The maritime delimitation case between Guinea-Bissau and Senegal also was discontinued by agreement, in the wake of a Judgment of the Court in a related case between those States. And, in another settlement, like that of the *Great Belt* made virtually on the courthouse steps, hearings due to take place in the *Aerial Incident* case between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United States of America were postponed *sine die* at the request of the parties in 1994. Subsequently the case was settled.

These breakthroughs in negotiation are to be welcomed. They do, however, pose certain problems for the Court in terms of deployment of its scarce resources, and I will return to this point in a moment.

My distinguished predecessor as President, Judge Bedjaoui, took up the theme of the Court's advisory function, its underutilization and its potential for expansion to a wider spectrum of organs and agencies. Since then, as the Assembly is aware, the Court has given two important Advisory Opinions, in July 1996, one at the request of the World Health Organization on the *Legality of the Use by a State of Nuclear Weapons in Armed Conflict*, and the other at the request of the General Assembly itself, on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*. The Court has noted the response of the General Assembly, in resolution 51/45 M, to the Court's opinion and its decision to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-second session an item entitled "Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*".

The limitations on the role of the Court can be structural, jurisdictional or circumstantial. Of the latter, the most obvious and immediate are resource constraints, notably, shortage of staff and money. The Court, a principal organ of the United Nations and, at the same time, in terms of staff and budget a very small fraction of it, has suffered severely over the current budgetary biennium from budgetary and staff cuts. However, the Secretary-General and his colleagues, and the Assembly itself, have been responsive in helping the Court to deal with its difficulties, with the fortuitous assistance of a rise in the value of the dollar. Their commitment to, and understanding of, the proper functioning of the Court as its Statute requires, is a matter of profound appreciation by the Court.

The Court continues to confront a heavy caseload under severe financial constraints. Resources are scarce and must be wisely deployed. Even though we have made some changes in the way in which we handle translation, our resources in this field are barely sufficient for the needs of immediately pending cases. There is no room for forward planning in the sense of embarking on the translation of cases which are not close to being ready for hearing, as there is simply no way of funding it. Moreover, there is uncertainty about whether it will be a wasted effort in the event of a settlement of the case before hearing.

This is why the consequences of an unpredicted settlement on the courthouse steps, however desirable it may be for the parties and for the broader interests of dispute resolution, can be disruptive of the Court's carefully resourced schedule of work. It is hard, in the present financial climate, to have a fallback position, especially at the merits phase of a case — that is, to have another case which is fully translated and ready for hearing, and which can be brought forward at short notice. While in an ideal world this would be desirable, in any event there is always an amplitude of pleadings requiring study by the members of the Court. The Court is at work even when it is not publicly sitting.

A fundamental consideration is the undoubted strength of the Court sitting in The Hague in its full composition. First, it can truly claim to be universal: its Members together represent the main forms of civilization and the principal legal systems of the world. Secondly, in combining both oral and written phases of procedure, it marries the key features of the common and civil law systems. The bench brings to bear the distinctive analytical techniques of both. At the same time, the Court's attitude towards evidence is demonstrably flexible. And lastly — and this is important — its decision-making process, carefully elaborated in the 1976 Resolution on the Internal Judicial Practice of the Court, is structured so as to permit each and every member of the Court to participate on an equal footing while maintaining the forward momentum of the drafting work.

On examining this resolution, one is struck by the careful balance of considerations of equality and discipline, and also by the importance of having an agreed structure and sequence to serve as the framework for the Court's deliberations. It is a coherent and coordinated process, with the emphasis squarely on the collective nature of the exercise. Consistently with this philosophy, Judges who might append separate or dissenting opinions still participate fully in the discussions and influence the contents of the Court's work, so that the judgment is in every sense the judgment of the whole Court. Those opinions are produced in the same time-frame as the judgment and are included with the text on the date it is rendered, rather than weeks or months later. If only because of the time it saves, which might otherwise be spent in discussing how to proceed — which can happen in arbitration, at a cost to the parties — the Court's established practice is a boon, and there is more to commend in it than that.

At the same time, any busy court must periodically review its procedures to ensure that they meet the needs of the day. In the last dozen years the Court has become much busier while, in the last few years, operating under sharp financial restrictions.

Because of their very nature, the proceedings of the Court cannot be swift — apart from provisional measures or the occasional urgent advisory opinion. The Court's procedures are designed to allow the institution judiciously to fulfil its unique and vital function in the service of international law, and to protect and uphold certain fundamental judicial principles. That function and those principles remain vital.

It is desirable that cases should be dealt with as expeditiously as possible, consistent with justice and with the highest levels of professional care. States themselves often require substantial periods of time for the preparation of their written pleadings. At the same time, with the increase in the Court's caseload in recent years, the time that elapses between the date when a case or a phase of a case is ready for a hearing, and when a case actually is heard, is too long, because the Court is still

dealing with prior cases. The Court has been studying how best this problem may be addressed.

It charged its Rules Committee with developing proposals to maximize the Court's efficiency. The Court has recently adopted a range of alterations to its working practices. Some of these will involve the parties, and some only the Court. The Court will inform parties to litigation of the new procedures that it proposes that may affect them. For instance, a new case cannot, of course, be heard until its pleadings are ready in both French and English. Because the translation of voluminous annexes of documents is expensive and time-consuming, it is to be hoped that the parties to cases before the Court will exercise every care to ensure that there are annexed to pleadings only those documents, or sections of documents, that are really required.

As for the measures that relate to the Court itself, it has been the longstanding practice for each Judge, upon the conclusion of the oral proceedings of a case, to prepare a written note, of whatever length he or she thinks appropriate, analysing the key issues of law in the case. These notes are translated and circulated for study before the Judges meet to deliberate on a case. The Court has now determined that it may proceed without written notes where it considers it necessary, in suitable cases concerning the jurisdiction of the Court or the admissibility of the application. This has already been the practice in the case of urgent requests for interim measures of protection. This departure will be on an experimental basis. The traditional practice regarding the preparation of written notes will be continued with regard to cases in which the Court is to decide on the merits.

The Court has made further important decisions directed to accelerating its work. In particular, appropriate cases on jurisdiction may be heard "back to back" — that is to say, in immediate succession — so that work may then proceed on them both concurrently. This innovation will be undertaken on an experimental basis, where there are appropriate cases and a pressing need to proceed rapidly.

The Court has also confirmed its recent practice in trying to give the parties notice of its intended schedule for the next three cases, believing that such forward planning assists both States and their counsel, and the Court.

In order to respond as best it may to the legitimate aspirations of States to have their cases heard as soon as possible, the Court has decided upon these measures and also upon a series of related and consequential changes in administrative and internal practices.

If States and the Court together cooperate along the lines I have indicated, we believe cases — including those on the current docket — can be ready for oral argument within an acceptable time after the conclusion of the written phase. States can come to the Court secure in the knowledge that their important legal disputes will be judicially resolved within a reasonable time.

Support for the Court from member States in its endeavour to continue to fulfil its statutory obligations in an optimal manner is, of course, most welcome. I note in this connection the proposals made by Mexico to the session of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization, held in January and February of this year. Mexico proposed that the International Court of Justice should be part of the ongoing process of reform and revitalization. Indeed it should.

However, I would urge Member States to bear in mind that such initiatives must be developed within the framework of the Court's Statute, which is an integral part of the Charter. The Statute can be amended, but no more easily than the Charter itself, and any amendments would require the most careful consideration. The Court itself, in the last article of its Statute, is given "power to propose such amendments to the present Statute as it may deem necessary". Article 30 of the Statute gives the Court the sole power to frame rules for carrying out its functions, and in particular its rules of procedure. The Court has, and must continue to enjoy, complete autonomy in establishing its own practices and procedures if its judicial independence is to be preserved. Equally, if it is to operate as the Charter provides, the Court must be accorded the resources to do its work. These are the essential conditions for the Court to further "the principles of justice and international law" to which the purposes of the United Nations Charter refer.

**Mr. Tello** (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): We are grateful to Judge Stephen M. Schwebel, President of the International Court of Justice, for the report he has submitted to the General Assembly. We appreciate this opportunity to strengthen the links of communication and cooperation between two principal organs of the United Nations. We are pleased to note that this year's report of the Court was published earlier than usual. We hope that this, which gives States timely information about the

work of the Court, will continue in the future and will mark the beginning of a more effective dialogue.

The pace of Court activities has increased considerably in recent years. We are pleased to note that States turn more frequently to judicial means for the settlement of their disputes. Yet in a situation where disputes on points of law are a fact of life, recourse to Court adjudication should be greater still.

At present, only 60 States — less than one third of the membership of the United Nations — recognize as compulsory the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice. This is a very low figure in an Organization of 185 Members. During the reporting period, only one State, Paraguay, deposited a declaration recognizing as compulsory the Court's jurisdiction as contemplated by Article 36 of the Statute of the Court. We welcome the decision taken by Paraguay and urge States that have not yet done so to do the same.

We are convinced that recognition of the Court's jurisdiction as compulsory by all the permanent members of the Security Council would prove to be a crucial and decisive element in promoting greater use of judicial means for the settlement of disputes. At present, only the United Kingdom recognizes this jurisdiction.

The broad dissemination of the publications and decisions of the Court improves the study of international law and facilitates the understanding of that subject. That is why we particularly welcome the Court's decision to set up an Internet site to expand the availability of its documents. We are confident that this decision will not affect the availability or the quantity of printed Court documents, which are still necessary in places with limited access to electronic media.

There is a reference in paragraph 153 of the report to the Court's present budgetary restrictions. In his statement to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session, the President of the Court spoke of that issue and of other factors that limit the capacity of the highest judicial organ to contribute to the peaceful settlement of disputes and to the purpose of the maintenance of peace. The current President has just made reference to the same problem. The delegation of Mexico is aware of these concerns and is convinced that the Court must have all the practical means it needs to strengthen its role; in the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization, my delegation has encouraged a discussion of the impact that the increased number of cases before the Court has on the Court's functioning.

*Ms. Eshmambetova (Kyrgyzstan), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

The objective of this exchange is to help the Court to deal with a growing caseload. We reiterate today that this exercise is not aimed at involving Member States in areas that are internal to the functioning to the Court, as this is the sole purview of the institution itself; nor is it aimed at leading to reforms in its Statute. The independence and authority of the Court must be preserved at all times. We hope that the Court, as well as States, will participate in this exercise, which we are confident can lead to a strengthened institution.

We underscore once again the importance of the advisory opinion handed down by the Court on 8 July 1996 regarding the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*. In its opinion, the Court determined that the threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict, and in particular the principles and rules of international humanitarian law. Likewise, and unanimously, it affirmed that there exists an obligation on the part of all States to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament under strict and effective international control. We note with concern that, in spite of this opinion, there is no sign yet of an unequivocal commitment on the part of all States to implement effectively this judgment by the Court.

In the already long history of humankind, the existence of this type of weapon constitutes an aberration which has lasted just a few decades. That is why we are convinced that it must disappear, and why Mexico will remain committed and work to make nuclear disarmament a reality in the near future.

**Mr. Amorim** (Brazil): I would like to start by thanking the President of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), Judge Schwebel, for his introduction of this year's report to the General Assembly. We welcome the opportunity afforded by the annual presentation of the ICJ's report to the General Assembly as a valuable occasion for an exchange on the work of the principal judicial organ of the United Nations.

During the Court's fiftieth anniversary in 1996, there were frequent references to a renewal of interest in

its activities. Judge Schwebel spoke of a burgeoning of the Court, with an increasing number of cases in its docket since the last decade. More recently, Judge Gilbert Guillaume has referred to "a resurrection of international justice". Many have pointed out that justice can contribute to the maintenance of international peace, and that peace favours recourse to justice. There seems to be a growing perception that the end of the cold war is conducive to the pacific settlement of disputes and that the International Court of Justice can play an important role, together with the General Assembly and the Security Council, in founding peace through justice, in conformity with the United Nations Charter.

The latest report from the ICJ indicates that at present there are nine cases before the Court. These cases involve disputes of varying nature, some of which have been associated with the use or threat of use of force, while others are of a more benign nature. In at least one case, the Court has been instrumental in helping to prevent hostility between two bordering nations in Africa from degenerating into an armed conflict. In other instances, it may be acting as a channel for preventive diplomacy, by defusing tensions which might otherwise have given way to unbridled antagonism.

The Judgment on the dispute concerning the projected diversion of the Danube for the construction of a dam on the Hungarian/Slovak border, made public after the issuance of the latest report, should hopefully contribute to promoting confidence and cooperation in a part of the world that is only now beginning to overcome a difficult period of transition.

In addition to its role in solving the contentious cases before it, the Court retains its unique capacity to issue advisory opinions on any legal question in response to requests by the General Assembly and the Security Council. The impact of the Advisory Opinion delivered on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons* can still be felt in the deliberations of the General Assembly, and there are many who feel that greater use should be made of the Court's expertise under Article 96.

Authoritative voices have suggested that the capacity of United Nations organs and its specialized agencies to request advisory opinions might be extended to include other intergovernmental international organizations. Many consider that the United Nations Secretary-General should be authorized to request advisory opinions on legal questions arising within the scope of his responsibilities.

As further evidence of the Court's enduring relevance, the number of treaties which provide for submission to it of disputes arising thereunder continues to grow, and at last count stood at 264, more than 100 of those being multilateral treaties.

Furthermore, in his critical appraisal of the ICJ's first 50 years, the President of the Court has suggested that affording other international courts the facility of appeal to the International Court of Justice merits consideration, as specialized international courts multiply and the need arises to ensure that various international courts do not develop conflicting interpretations of international law. The intensification of the negotiating process for the establishment of an international criminal court should be borne in mind in this context.

At the same time, the question of calling upon the Court to examine the jurisdictional boundaries between the different organs of the United Nations system and granting it powers of judicial review over administrative action or political decisions is one that is likely to re-emerge some time in the future, given the appropriate political climate.

In short, in all likelihood, the workload of the judges will tend to increase and to gain in significance. It is therefore necessary that the General Assembly and the general public be kept well informed of the Court's activities, and that appropriate resources be allocated for it to meet the rising demand for its services.

The section on publications and documents in this year's report admits that there have been delays caused by the present budgetary restrictions in the publishing of the Court's fascicles and Yearbook, a trend which could give rise to concern if it were to persist. But more serious seem to be the warnings to the effect that the Court has been falling behind schedule in discharging its substantive responsibilities. Remedies must be found to prevent such undue delays from giving rise to scepticism or disillusionment regarding the Court's international role, a development which would not be in conformity with the rising expectations of the international community for an order founded on the rule of law, as well as on transparency and accountability.

We are grateful to the delegation of Mexico for having proposed that the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization examine practical ways and means to strengthen the Court and to enhance its

capacity to contribute to the peaceful settlement of disputes and the maintenance of international peace. As was clarified by the representative of Mexico, such an undertaking could be carried out without the need to amend the Charter or the Statute, and without purporting to undermine the authority or independence of the Court.

We agree that some thought can usefully be given to improving the Court's capacity to deal with a larger number of cases in a more expeditious and efficient manner, and we would concur with the suggestion that the Court itself, as well as Member States, submit their written comments on the matter.

I should like briefly to digress, to make a comment that I believe is relevant in this context.

A draft resolution was circulated on 22 October which raises important legal questions going beyond the immediate aims of its proponents. The draft, contained in document A/52/L.7, suggests that there is a

> "need to comply faithfully with the provisions of Article 108 of the Charter of the United Nations with respect to any resolution with Charter amendment implications".

The word "implications" is dangerously vague, possibly intentionally. The Charter does not provide for the adoption of draft resolutions according to Article 108, which applies specifically to amendments. Is it admissible that the majorities mentioned in Article 108 become applicable to draft resolutions which are not actual Charter amendments through the adoption of a draft resolution itself? And, assuming it is, would not that draft resolution itself be subject, by the same logic, to Article 108 provisions in turn, since it would stretch too far the meaning of a Charter provision?

It should be recalled that Article 108 also refers to ratification, and requires that the five permanent members of the Security Council approve the amendments before they come into force. Is it thus being suggested that resolutions which may or may not in the future be translated into Charter amendments would be subject to ratification, and thus to the veto? Is it acceptable to introduce the veto power into the General Assembly? A resolution, may I recall, is not an amendment; it is the sense of the General Assembly, even if, at a future stage, it may be the basis of an amendment, which then, but only then, would be subject, of course, to the provisions of Article 108.

Without going into the political merit of the requirement for a large majority when important draft resolutions are voted on, a requirement with which we agree, we must consider carefully the serious precedents these drafts, if adopted, would establish.

This is the kind of question that would probably benefit from the Court's legal advice, provided it can act expeditiously.

**Mr. Mabilangan** (Philippines): I would like to start by expressing my gratitude for the comprehensive and enlightening report of Mr. Stephen Schwebel, President of the International Court of Justice.

My country, one of 60 of the 185 parties to the Statute of the Court that recognize as compulsory the jurisdiction of the Court, continues to give work of the Court the highest regard and importance. We feel that the Court is significant not only as a distinguished and viable venue for the settlement of disputes, but also as a major factor in maintaining faith in the law in our fragmented global legal system.

States by and large prefer that the Court avoid creating law. States would still like to reserve that exercise for themselves. But the Court's pronouncements are a primary source for international lawyers, scholars and policy makers. Practically every paragraph of a decision or advisory opinion is scrutinized, probed, examined and quoted. Most cases and advisory opinions lead to publicists' filling journals and books with hundreds of pages of analysis and comments. In that sense, the Court plays a significant role in saying what the law is for a great many people.

States make treaties. States make the practice and manifest the *opinio juris* that build customary law. States, in so doing, look to the work of the Court. The body of work created by the Court is probably the most influential factor when a State acts in the context of making or applying international law.

It is a truism in most legal systems that hard cases make bad law. In the international arena, so far, hard cases make no law. With far too few exceptions, the truly significant disputes and conflicts in the world are still to see the light of day in the Court or in any other judicial or third-party forum. This is still true today, even though a State that finds itself tempted by self-interest to erode traditional and established norms may in time regret its conduct.

Some have pointed to the non-compulsory jurisdiction of the Court as its major weakness. In some instances, those involved in a dispute lament that the Court does not have universal and compulsory jurisdiction. This is an attitude that oversimplifies the nature and content of international disputes. The non-compulsory jurisdiction of the Court for them becomes an excuse for inaction.

My region is experiencing an era of peace and stability that has provided a firm basis for its sustained progress and growth. Yet we are not without problems. In the seas central to our region, we have disputes over territory and boundaries. The Philippines has consistently taken a position of resolving these disputes peacefully, including bringing them to the Court. We continue to maintain this position.

We have been moving forward in addressing these disputes, though the steps we have taken are small, few and cautious. We are confident that we will find a just, peaceful and lasting solution to this situation, and we study very closely each and every legal pronouncement and formulation the Court makes in cases before it that concern territorial and maritime disputes.

From the report of the Court, we note that the Court's docket today is the fullest it has ever been. There was a time when it was not so full. There was a time when the Court had so few cases that the rumoured practice of the Chief Clerk of the Permanent Court of International Justice would come to mind. In the 1920s and 1930s the Chief Clerk of that Court was said to have made his way about the capitals of Europe as a kind of *agent provocateur*, talking up border disputes that the Court could adjudicate.

But I anticipate that even more cases will be brought to the Court. The end of the cold war meant a reduction in the role that power played in determining the outcome of State behaviour in its many aspects. Today states have the law as a primary guide for their behaviour. Also the stigma of resorting to third parties is declining.

Our interdependent world is turning into a very complex one. While the reports of the death of the State are exaggerated, today States are disaggregating into separate, functionally distinct parts. Non-State and sub-State actors that bring with them vastly complex and wide varieties of issues are forcing us to reassess the rules that govern us. These factors, unimaginable only a decade ago, are causing States to be as creative in resolving their disputes as the situation demands.

The changed global circumstances has also made possible one of the most significant requests for an advisory opinion ever made of the Court. While a definitive ruling on the specific issue before it would have been desirable, the assumption by the Court of its jurisdiction on a highly political issue and its subsequent Advisory Opinion on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons* is a welcome development. The Court must, therefore, have the resources by which to play its increasing role in resolving disputes and in the progress of international law.

In spite of the logistical difficulties facing the Court, it has not failed to keep up with technology and the challenges of cyberspace. The Court has an impressive website, dignified and full of useful information, yet user-friendly. While the website contains many useful documents, I hope that the day will come when the Court's wisdom and erudition will truly be available to anyone who can dial up a server and access the Internet. On my visit to the Court's website, I saw that the decisions and pleadings in two or three cases were accessible through its website.

It is my hope that one day all the decisions, advisory opinions, orders and pleadings of the Court will be available on the website. I know that this is a rather daunting task, considering the current limitations experienced by the Court. Neither do I wish to deprive of their business existing websites or services that offer these documents at prices only rich law firms or well-endowed institutions can afford. But there is much that the Court says about international law that could help guide States, not only in settling disputes, but also in preventing them, as well as in their general dealings with other subjects and objects of international law.

While on the subject of the Court's Internet presence, I could not help but notice something else about its website. The word "web" in Internet language is used on purpose, and is very descriptive of the nature and practice in the Internet of linkages and interusage. Yet, in what is a rather rare case for websites on the Internet, the Court's website has no links with other sites, not even with the United Nations Home Page.

As an avid user of the Internet, at first I found this strange. But after a few seconds of cybershock I realized the profound symbolism in this: that the Court is indeed an independent body. It is this independence, together with its probity and integrity, and a well-deserved infusion of resources, that will sustain the Court as it

continues to assume a central role in the pursuit of justice and the maintenance of world peace.

**Mr. Kamaruddin Bin Ahmad** (Malaysia): My delegation wishes to congratulate Judge Stephen M. Schwebel on his re-election, as well as his elevation to the presidency of the International Court of Justice, and to thank him for his report in document A/52/4. My delegation also wishes to congratulate both Judge Pieter H. Kooijmans and Judge Francesco Rezek on their election to the Court. Our felicitations also go to Judges M. Bedjaoui and S. Vereshchetin on their re-election.

My delegation notes that there has been increasing recourse to the Court by Member States over the years. It is also heartening to note that 60 States have made declarations recognizing as compulsory the jurisdiction of the Court, as stipulated in article 36, paragraphs 2 and 5, of the Statute. This positive development is to be welcomed, as it will contribute to the continued relevance and strengthening of the Court in the United Nations system.

The International Court of Justice, like other United Nations organs, has an important role to play in the promotion of peace and harmony between nations and peoples of the world through the rule of law. However, it is disquieting to note that nine contentious cases under the Court's review are still pending. Some of these cases, in my delegation's view, would have been expeditiously solved, especially when much substantive work has already been done, but for the objections of certain Member States by virtue of article 79, paragraph 3, of the Rules of Court. In our view, resorting to that article too frequently will only delay settlement of the cases, and will not be in the overall interest of Member States. We would, therefore, urge parties to disputes before the Court to cooperate as fully as possible with it to ensure an expeditious settlement of their disputes.

In the light of the increase in the number of cases referred to the International Court of Justice in the last several years, there is an urgent need to strengthen the Court's capacity to handle these cases. We note that the Court has been placed under a severe strain, with reductions in both its human and financial resources. Consequently, it has not been able satisfactorily to provide its judicial services to meet with the increasing demands made by Member States. My delegation, therefore, strongly supports the call for the Court to be given adequate human and financial resources to enable it to fulfil its functions and responsibilities as an important organ within the United Nations system. My delegation further hopes that, with the establishment and commissioning of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, States will consider referring their maritime disputes to the Tribunal, thereby lessening the Court's burden.

As the only judicial organ of the United Nations, the Court, my delegation also believes, should be a source of advisory opinions for other organs of the United Nations. The intergovernmental organs of the United Nations should not only utilize the Court as a source that can interpret the relevant and applicable laws, but should also refer controversial issues to the Court for advisory opinions. In this regard, Malaysia is particularly pleased with the Advisory Opinion rendered by the Court last year on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*, which, in the view of my delegation, was an important development in the issue of nuclear disarmament.

It is clear to my delegation that the Court's judgments and opinions have all contributed to the progressive development of international law, and this is consistent with the thrust and aims of the United Nations Decade of International Law programme. Even if, on occasions, a request to file a case has been dismissed by the Court on certain legal or technical grounds, the filing of these cases has, nevertheless, had a salutary impact on account of the publicity generated.

My delegation commends the efforts made by the Court to increase public awareness and understanding of its work, such as through the various talks and lectures given by the President and other members of the Court, as well as by the Registrar and other officials of the Court. While disseminating information about the Court through traditional methods is to be welcomed and further encouraged, my delegation believes that the use of advanced technology in enhancing public awareness about the Court and its activities should be improved. To this end, we express strong support for the steps taken by the Court to take advantage of the benefits provided by the electronic media, such as the Internet, and in particular the construction of its own website, which should facilitate public access to the Court's voluminous documents.

In conclusion, it is the view of my delegation that, like the other organs and institutions within the United Nations system, the International Court of Justice should directly benefit from the ongoing reform process undertaken by the United Nations. A revitalized

International Court of Justice should certainly contribute to its effectiveness and efficiency in handling the many cases before it, thereby enhancing the role of the Court in the promotion of justice under international law.

**Mr. Rebagliati** (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): First, I should like to welcome Judge Stephen M. Schwebel to this Hall, and say how pleased Argentina is at his election to the Presidency of the International Court of Justice (ICJ). We would also like to express our appreciation to Judge Mohammed Bedjaoui for the brilliant leadership he demonstrated during his Presidency.

Argentina attaches particular importance to this type of dialogue which takes place annually between the General Assembly and the International Court of Justice to examine the progress of the Court's work. This periodic contact not only demonstrates the General Assembly's interest in the Court's activities, it is also exemplary of the close cooperation that must exist between the principal organs of the United Nations for the attainment of their objectives.

The ICJ, in its capacity as the international community's principal judicial organ, has fundamental responsibilities for the peaceful settlement of disputes through the application of the rule of law. In fulfilling this specific function, the Court occupies a privileged place in the overall system for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Without being unduly optimistic, we must emphasize the growing importance of the Court and the law in today's world. Though international society remains consensus-driven, it is clear that international relations are increasingly permeated by the law. The rule of law is of particular importance in weaving the international fabric of a globalized society in which unity and interdependence coexist with a trend towards fragmentation and the worsening of local conflicts.

The progress in international law is manifested in the growing will of States to submit their disputes to jurisdictional dispute settlement mechanisms, and to accept adjudication by third parties in order to make State responsibility effective. At the same time, States are moving towards establishing the individual penal responsibility of those who commit extremely grave international crimes, through the creation of special courts and the forthcoming establishment of an international criminal court.

All of this reveals the aspiration of States to strengthen the law and punish violations. More generally, it reflects the international community's progressive recognition that justice is an essential component of a stable peace.

In this context, the number and complexity of the cases brought before the International Court of Justice attests, in particular, to the willingness of States to submit and entrust to the Court the most varied aspects of international relations.

In the period covered by the report, the Court has handled cases involving central aspects of international peace and security, such as questions arising from the aerial incident at Lockerbie, oil platforms, or the implementation of the international Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

The fact that the Court is dealing with matters that are undoubtedly among the most complex and topical of international law reveals the growing international trust in its authority, integrity, impartiality and independence. Its vitality and prestige have been reflected not only in the nature of the cases brought before it, but also in the increase in the number of States from all regions that have turned to the Court for the settlement of disputes. At the same time, the will of States to develop international law and broaden its content is apparent. This, in turn, should benefit the functions of the Court by strengthening the legal basis for their exercise.

The States must see to it that the International Court of Justice will be able to cope with the expected expansion of its activities. The Court is endowed by its Statute and rules with the procedural tools it needs in order effectively to carry out its functions, both with respect to dispute settlement and in the framework of its equally important advisory authority.

We must ensure that the Court is also provided with adequate resources to make the best use of those tools, which were designed by the founding fathers and the members of the Court themselves. At a time when our Organization is confronting severe budgetary restraints and is debating the process of reform, we most not allow circumstantial problems to undermine the ICJ's immense potential in the maintenance of international peace and security.

**Mr. Berrocal Soto** (Costa Rica) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation is pleased to be able to take the floor in this debate on the report of the International Court of Justice (document A/52/4). We are particularly honoured by the presence of the distinguished President of the Court, Judge Schwebel, whose erudition is well known and widely admired.

Costa Rica has renounced the force of arms and accepted the force of law. International law is the sole, reliable guarantee of our independence and sovereignty. Our faith in the principles of the Charter has enabled us to throw off the financial and budgetary burden of maintaining an army and has enabled us to build a more humane and just society, based on universal respect for human rights.

This year my country is celebrating the forty-ninth anniversary of the constitutional abolition of its armed forces. In this connection, respect and support for the rule of law are the fundamental pillars of our foreign policy and our position here in the United Nations. The promotion of human rights, respect for international humanitarian law, the implementation of the principle of non-intervention, total adherence to the prohibition of the use of force and the fostering of democracy as the ideal way to realize the right of peoples to self-determination — these are all recurring themes in our international actions, both here in the General Assembly and in the Security Council. Only respect for those principles, which are central to international law, can enable us to build an international society that is more humane, just and harmonious, more peaceful and more civilized.

In this, the International Court of Justice plays a central role. Any legal system requires effective machinery for the peaceful settlement of disputes. If that machinery did not exist, disputes would interfere with the normal processes of international relations and could become threats to peace. States therefore have an unequivocal obligation to settle disputes peacefully and without recourse to armed force. In this connection, the International Court of Justice is eminently well equipped. When States are unable to settle their disputes through negotiations, they can have recourse to the Court in exercise of their sovereign right to choose the means to settle disputes. Only the Court possesses the appropriate intellectual and material resources to analyse thoroughly the various de facto and *de jure* arguments submitted by the parties to the dispute, and only the Court can then hand down a solution to satisfy the parties' desire for justice within the context of the United Nations Charter.

Furthermore — and this is one of its essential functions — the International Court of Justice plays a central role in the progressive development of international law. In particular, Costa Rica believes that the Court's Advisory Opinion on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons* is one of the milestones in the development of international law, recognizing as it does the obligation on all States to enter into negotiations in good faith on complete nuclear disarmament under effective international control. My country is fully committed to compliance with that commitment and is prepared to participate in such fundamental and necessary negotiations at any time.

In the light of what I have said, and given the extremely important role of the International Court of Justice, it is regrettable that so far only one third of the States of the international community — some 60 States only — have recognized the compulsory jurisdiction of the Court. It is also regrettable that, in addition, many of them have limited their recognition by expressing reservations, thereby unnecessarily restricting the work that the Court can accomplish. Costa Rica therefore invites all States that have not yet done so to recognize the Court's compulsory jurisdiction. Costa Rica believes, in particular, that recognition of that jurisdiction should be a requirement for all States whose nationals are nominated as candidates to such a lofty tribunal, for permanent members of the Security Council and for those that wish to become permanent members under the reforms currently being discussed at this fifty-second session of the General Assembly. We call upon the 120 countries that have not yet recognized the compulsory jurisdiction of the Court to do so, in accordance with the provisions of paragraphs 2 and 5 of article 36 of the Court's Statute.

The International Court of Justice is flourishing. The number of cases before it, as reflected in the report (A/52/4) now before the Assembly, is unusually high, and it is especially being used by developing countries. In addition, as we have said, the recent Advisory Opinions on the legality of the use of nuclear weapons involved the participation of an unprecedented number of States. This attests to the growing interest and confidence in the Court, which we believe is a very healthy and positive trend.

However, we cannot fail to mention that proceedings before the Court continue to present unnecessary difficulties for developing States. Litigation, if not the Court's Statute and rules, requires lengthy pleadings and

extensive documentation, dozens of lawyers and long years before the Court can reach a final decision on a case. This entails prohibitive costs for most States, and is one of the reasons for the Court's present financial crisis. The Court should refrain from encouraging such practices. On the contrary, it should discourage the unnecessary submission and presentation of evidence and documentation, which must be translated by the Court. Furthermore, judges should set limits on the length and extent of their separate and dissenting opinions, realizing that the quality of the Court's opinions is not dependent on their copiousness or their scope. If those practical and concrete steps could be taken, at the Court's discretion and respecting the sovereign right of parties to present their cases, and the independence of the judges, the Court could resolve its present financial crisis and become more efficient in dealing with the cases submitted for its consideration.

We cannot, of course, deny that the financial crisis of the United Nations itself has imposed serious restraints on the work of the Court. We must strengthen the Court's budget so that it can rebuild the necessary administrative and investigative services it requires to carry out its work effectively. My delegation recognizes the efforts the Court has made recently to increase the dissemination of information. We welcome in particular the idea of having documents and judgments made available to the public on the Internet. We believe that will not only reduce costs in the future but will also promote knowledge of and research into the work of the Court, particularly in developing countries that do not normally have access to the Court's documentation but can now access it on the Internet. That is indeed important progress that should be noted.

The International Court of Justice and other international bodies concerned with the administration of justice — such as the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea and the international criminal court whose establishment is now being negotiated — embody the joint effort the international community is making to ensure the rule of law in the conduct of international relations. In this connection, these bodies are an essential part of the international community.

My country wishes once again to reiterate its full support for and confidence in the outstanding work the Court has done, as reflected in its important decisions.

**The Acting President**: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on agenda item 13, "Report of the International Court of Justice". May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 13?

*It was so decided.*

**Programme of work**

**The President:** I should like to inform members that agenda item 27, entitled "Return or restitution of cultural property to the countries of origin", originally scheduled for tomorrow morning, Tuesday, 28 October, will be taken up at a later date to be announced.

Agenda item 14, entitled "Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency", originally scheduled for Monday morning, 3 November, will now be taken up on Wednesday, 12 November, in the morning.

I should now like to make an announcement concerning agenda item 20, entitled "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance", which is scheduled for consideration by the General Assembly on Monday, 24 November in the morning.

I have requested His Excellency Mr. Ernst Sucharipa, Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations, who during the three previous sessions so ably coordinated the informal consultations on draft resolutions under the same agenda item, to assist once again in the same capacity at this session, and Ambassador Sucharipa has graciously accepted.

May I request those delegations intending to submit draft resolutions under agenda item 20 to do so as early as possible in order to allow time, if need be, for negotiations with a view to reaching consensus on the draft resolutions.

*The meeting rose at 11.35 p.m.*